

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Cumbria
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Full time
Approval visit date	05 March 2020
Case reference	CAS-14991-S6J0N0

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### Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

## Section 1: Our regulatory approach

### Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

### How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Andrew Jones	Paramedic
John Donaghy	Paramedic
Deirdre Keane	Lay
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Stephanie Evans	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Cumbria
Helen Harling	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Cumbria
Liz Mallabon	Internal panel member	University of Cumbria
Raye Ng	Internal panel member	University of Cumbria
Nina Richardson	Learner panel member	University of Cumbria

Davy Bradshaw	External panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
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## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
Proposed first intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 25
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02154

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

## Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we ask for certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes
Internal quality monitoring documentation	Yes

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

Senior staff	Yes
Practice educators	Yes
Programme team	Yes

## Section 4: Outcome from first review

### Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

### Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 01 May 2020.

### **3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that learners understand that if they do not pass the practical components in the third year, they will not be eligible to apply for registration even if they have accumulated 360 credits.

**Reason:** From the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were aware that the placements in year three were non credit-bearing, but that they still needed to be passed for the learners to receive the award. There was an exit award available for those who accumulated 360 credits without passing the final year practice components, but this award would not be HCPC-approved. They considered that this arrangement was reasonable, but they were not clear from the materials provided for learners that it would be adequately communicated to the learners that they must pass the practice modules to be eligible to apply for HCPC registration. The visitors were therefore unable to determine whether this standard was met, and require further evidence of how learners will be enabled to understand the consequences of the different awards.

### **6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clarify the process for appointing an external examiner for the programme, and the timescales for this process.

**Reason:** The education provider submitted a generic document related to external examiner appointments. However, it was not clear to the visitors from this evidence what specific arrangements were in place to appoint an external examiner for this particular programme, how the education provider would ensure that the external examiner would be appropriately qualified and experienced, and how they would ensure that the position was filled in good time. They therefore require further evidence relating to how and when an external examiner would be appointed.

### **Recommendations**

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

### **3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing programme documentation for clarity and accuracy.

**Reason:** The visitors considered that this standard was met, as the programme had clear and appropriate management structures and experienced staff in place in key positions. However, they did notice during their review of the documentation that there were a certain number of minor errors and out-of-date references. For example, there were references to learners having a normal NHS working week, including evenings and weekends, and a mention of “radiographic skills” rather than paramedic skills. In the programme handbook, on page 4, it is stated that completing the programme will “enable” learners to register, rather than giving them eligibility to apply for registration. None of these errors prevent the programme meeting the standards at present, but the visitors considered that if they were not amended they might create a risk in future that standards around accurate information for learners were not met.

### **3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should keep under review its measures for ensuring the effectiveness of their relationship with the providers of spoke placements.

**Reason:** The visitors were aware from the documentation and from discussions at the visit that the education provider intended to run practice-based learning on a “hub and spoke” model. They were satisfied that this was appropriate and that the standard was met because of ongoing and effective relationships between the education provider and the placements. However, the visitors did also note that the ongoing effective delivery of the programme would depend on these relationships being maintained, and so they suggest that the education provider continue to ensure that they co-operate effectively.

### **3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should continue to keep the service user and carer involvement under review in order to ensure that the involvement continues to reflect the breadth of paramedic practice.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met at threshold as there was an experienced and sizeable service user and carer group in place at the education provider. There was close involvement with both the existing paramedic provision (the DipHE), and with the planning for this programme. They were also aware from discussions at the visit that the education provider had a commitment to ongoing development of the service user and carer involvement. The visitors therefore suggest that one particular goal for this development should be to ensure that the service user group should continue to reflect as wide a range as possible of the work of paramedics. This will mitigate any future risk of the service user and carer group not preparing learners for paramedic practice.

## Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 02 July 2020 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).