

Approval process quality report

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| Education provider | Keele University |
| Name of programme(s) | MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics |
| Date Assessment commenced | 18 August 2021 |
| Visitor recommendation made | 26 October 2021 |
| Case reference | CAS-01044-L4P9N1 |

Summary of findings from this assessment

This a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

The outcomes of this process were as follows:

- Further Stage 1 assessment was not required based on the new programme(s) being proposed for delivery.
- The visitors recommended the programme(s) be approved as all programme level standards were met through their Stage 2 assessment.

The Education and Training Committee will now meet to consider the visitors recommendations and make a decision regarding programme approval.

The areas we cover in this report

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Section 1: Background information

Who we are

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.

Our standards

We approve institutions and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which 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.

Our standards are divided into two levels based on their relevance to the institution and programme(s). The following considerations were made when splitting standards between institution and programme level:

- Where accountability best sits, with either the accountable person for the institution or programme
- How the standard is worded, with references to the education provider and processes often best sitting at the institution level, and references to the programme or profession often best sitting at the programme level
- We have preferred seeking assurance at the institution level, to fit with our intention to put the institution at the centre of our quality assurance model.

Our approach to quality assuring education

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of institution and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards

Institutions and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

The approval process

We take a staged approach to quality assurance, as we need to understand practices which will support delivery of all programmes within an institution, prior to assessing the programme level detail. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we assess to be assured that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)
- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the process we will initially review the proposal and then design our assessment based on the issues we find. As such the assessment methods will be different based on the issues which arise in each case.

How we make 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 design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. 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 the 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](#).

Section 2: Our assessment

Stage 1 assessment: The institution

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| Education provider | Keele University |
| Key contact | Anne O'Brien |

As part of the initiation of the process the education provider indicated that the proposed programme would be part of Keele University. This institution is well established with HCPC and currently delivers approved programmes in:

- Biomedical scientist
- Physiotherapist
- Diagnostic radiographer
- Independent / Supplementary prescribing
- Paramedic

In previous standards assessments of these programmes, visitors have established the institution level standards are met. The provider has also demonstrated this through ongoing monitoring carried out by the HCPC.

As part of the provider's definition of their institution, they have defined the policies, procedures and processes that apply to the programmes delivered within it. These relate to the institution level standards we set which ensure the following areas are managed effectively:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Admissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information for applicants• Assessing English language, character, and health• Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)• Equality, diversity and inclusion |
| Governance, leadership and management | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective programme delivery• Effective staff management• Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level |
| Quality, monitoring and evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic components, including how curricula are kept up to date• Practice components, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments• Learner involvement• Service user and carer involvement |
| Learners | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support• Ongoing professional suitability• Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)• Equality, diversity and inclusion |
| Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectivity• Progression and achievement |

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals |
|--|---|

Assurance that institution level standards are met

As part of this stage, we considered how the proposed MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics programme fits into the named institution by considering any notable changes to the policies, procedures and processes related to the areas above.

We considered how the proposed programmes are assimilated with the management of existing approved programmes in the institution. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in way that was consistent with the definition of their institution. On this basis, we were satisfied it is appropriate for the programme to sit as part of Keele University and take assurance the institution level standards will continue to be met by its introduction.

Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

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|---|-------------------------------|
| Education provider | Keele University |
| Accountable person (for the programmes) | Anne O'Brien |
| Programmes | MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics |
| Profession | Prosthetist / Orthotist |
| Mode of study | Full time |
| Learner numbers | 20 |
| Type of programme | Pre-registration |
| Qualification level | Postgraduate |
| Start date | 01 January 2022 |

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

We also considered other sources of information, intelligence, and data such as the Higher Education statistics Agency (HESA), Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the National Student Survey (NSS).

| Performance area | Data point / comparison | Benchmark | Data | Score |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Performance indicator | Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers | 460 | 463 | 0.00 |
| Performance indicator | Aggregation of percentage not continuing | 6.8 | 4.9 | 0.01 |
| Performance indicator | Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study | 95.5 | 96.1 | 0.04 |
| Teaching quality | TEF award | N/A | Gold | 0.00 |
| Learner / graduate satisfaction | NSS overall satisfaction score (Q27) | 75.01 | 80.63 | 0.08 |
| Total | | N/A | N/A | 1.00 |

What the scores mean

Overall, the enrolled numbers across the institution are within reasonable range of the numbers approved by the HCPC. Keele University has a very small number of learners not continuing which may indicate a very high percentage of learners are satisfied with their learning at this institution. Overall risk scores can range from 0 to 1. Keele University has an overall score of 1, which means they are performing at a very high level and we can take some assurance from these scores when considering possible risks to the proposed programme.

Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information against our programme level standards:

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| Registrant visitors | Hazel Anderson - prosthetist / orthotist |
| | Fiona McCullough - dietitian |

Assessment of the proposal

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard.
- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information around.
- Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors discussed and finalised the most appropriate quality activity to undertake this investigation.

Quality activity:

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary. We considered it was appropriate and proportionate to request additional information via further documentation.

The themes we explored are as follows:

| Theme | Reason for additional clarification / documentation |
|---|--|
| How the education provider ensures collaboration between them and practice education providers is effective. | The visitors saw evidence of a collaborative approach being adopted in the process of practice educator recruitment, which involves evaluation and induction. They also noted that thorough guidance and support was provided to practice educators through initial training and when there are failing learners. However, the visitors were unclear what routine collaboration exists between the education provider and practice educators and how this is planned at programme level. The visitors needed to be clear if this included a 3-way collaboration with learners. The visitors also considered evidence of meetings with practice education providers would further demonstrate the effectiveness of their collaboration. |
| How the education provider makes sure there is an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. | The visitors considered the education provider's approach to link with the national placement pilot and map capacity with other providers was helpful. However, the visitors noted that placements have been shortened to make allocation easier within the region. The visitors also needed to know if the service level agreements had been signed off yet. The visitors received a placement spreadsheet that demonstrated many of the proposed providers will not overlap placements with existing learners from Salford and Strathclyde. However, the visitors were interested to find out how Keele, and Salford in particular, will coordinate their placements if Salford learners have placements all year round. |

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| <p>Ensuring adequate staffing capacity to deliver an effective programme.</p> | <p>The visitors saw a staff: learner ratio of 1:7, which they considered adequate for the first intake. The visitors however saw a plan to increase learner intake to 50 and wondered if there was a similar commitment to increase staffing if and when this occurs.</p> |
| <p>Ensuring adequate resources to support learning in all settings.</p> | <p>The visitors saw there are adequate and available resources on placement. The visitors also noted other resources at the education provider such as the library, and the programme and placement handbooks were clearly laid out. The visitors noted however, that the Prosthetics and Orthotics building was currently at the planning stage. The visitors were unable to determine how likely the building was to be completed in time for the first intake and contingency plans if not.</p> |
| <p>How the education provider ensures staffing in practice-based learning is adequate.</p> | <p>The visitors were satisfied that all clinical practice educators are prosthetists or orthotists and noted evidence of their training, including non-clinical placement practice educators. Given the possibility that some practice educators may have learners from more than one education provider at the same time, the visitors needed to be clear if Keele has a maximum ratio of learner to practice educators. The visitors also needed to be clear if a learner is assigned to a named practice educator or to the clinical centre/placement. The visitors also considered that the number of practice educators available is adequate for 20 learners but they wanted to know if there was a timeline and plan to increase when learner numbers go up to 50.</p> |
| <p>Ensuring practice educators are suitable and able to support learners in a safe and effective way.</p> | <p>The visitors saw a 3-stage training provided to new practice educators, with a targeted version given to those experienced with Salford or Strathclyde learners. However, the visitors were unclear what practice educator training will be delivered by Keele University considering that many of the practice educators will already have learners from other education providers in the region. The visitors were keen to know what training will be required for the practice educators and the delivery plan.</p> |
| <p>Ensuring that the way practice-based learning is designed allows learners to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and the standards of proficiency.</p> | <p>There were innovative dedicated manufacturing setting placements but with reduced clinical placements. The visitors noted that the learning outcomes were heavily reliant on exposure to clinical practice. The visitors considered that the workshop/manufacturing placements are of value and welcomed by the profession. However, they considered the risk that heavy reliance on these may have on how learners meet the learning outcomes and the SOPs. This is because the learning outcomes and the SOPs are mostly linked to clinical practice.</p> |

Summary of visitor findings

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

The visitors considered that the Masters level was an appropriate level of qualification for the new MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics programme.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this standard.

SET 2: Programme admissions

Information provided in the programme specification and the Course Specific Regulations document clearly demonstrated the programme's entry requirements and the interview selection process. Information around costs and how learners are supported on the programme was clearly laid out to assist applicants in their decision making. A letter from the Head of School also provided additional information on the support provided to develop the programme and ensure suitable applicants are recruited on to the programme.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

Evidence, including an introductory letter from the Head of School, programme specification, staff CVs and the student and placement handbooks, all demonstrated that the programme is adequately supported. The visitors noted that a dedicated member of the Prosthetics and Orthotics academic team will lead the Prosthetics and Orthotics placements throughout the course. This will include monitoring placement provision throughout the course to ensure each learner achieves a balanced profile of Prosthetic and Orthotic experience prior to their MSc completion.

The visitors also received evidence of collaborative working with other providers in the region. For example, they saw that Keele University have been part of a "Placement E-learning Form (PELF)" project for 18 months, collaborating with colleagues in Salford / Strathclyde and Derby. This has created a forum for them to dialogue and work together to improve the placement allocation process.

The staff CVs demonstrated adequate staff with appropriate clinical experience in all key areas. A business plan agreed by the University Executive Committee also provided projected staffing level for the first five years.

A building delivery timeline submitted confirmed that the Prosthetics and Orthotics building would be ready for the first intake in January 2022. An additional contingency time was also included in learners' timetabling should there be any delay.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 4: Programme design and delivery

The education provider submitted a comprehensive standard of proficiency (SOPs) mapping. The standards of conduct, performance and ethics were also covered in the programme specification, taught modules and the placement handbook. Mapping to the British Association of Prosthetists & Orthotists standards demonstrated how philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base are reflected throughout the programme. The modules, practical sessions and placements were appropriately timed throughout the programme which demonstrated integration of theory and practice. Post placement debrief session's evidenced autonomous and reflective thinking and the module contents and research projects demonstrated the programme supports evidence-based practice.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 5: Practice-based learning

Sections of the placement handbook demonstrated placements have been designed to include a variety of opportunities for learners, within the programme. One of the key areas noted is the understanding of the manufacturing and design of prosthetic and orthotic devices upon which clinical development is dependent. The visitors saw that there was support from stakeholders for learners to develop skills in this area, and the visitors were reassured the non-clinical placements will not be used to replace clinical placements and that learning outcomes will be achieved within placement timeline.

The visitors also saw that all Prosthetics and Orthotics practice educators working in a clinical setting are HCPC registered and current health professionals. Keele University will provide Practice Educator training for all practice educators. Some industry-based placements will be supervised by Prosthetics and Orthotics industry experts who will not be HCPC registered, but who will have undertaken the Keele Practice Information on Practice Educator training.

Evidence submitted also showed 0.2 whole time equivalent (WTE) dedicated placement support senior orthotist will be seconded for the first year of the programme therefore the visitors were confident that practice-based learning will be effectively coordinated.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 6: Assessment

The visitors considered that the mapping of assessments clearly demonstrated how the SOPs will be delivered. The visitors considered that the programme specification clearly outlined the requirements to progress through, and successfully complete the

programme. The visitors identified an effective range of assessments including practical, oral and written assessments, focusing on critical analysis, justification and decision making. Policies are well documented and explained to learners in the student handbook and clear regulations were set out in the programme specification.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

Section 3: The visitors' recommendations

Based on these findings the visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

Programme approval

The programme is recommended for approval, without conditions.

Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 07 December 2021.