

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Sunderland
Name of programme(s)	Non-medical prescribing (Independent and Supplementary prescribing V300), Part time
Approval visit date	22 April 2020
Case reference	CAS-15764-W2W0B9

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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 for prescribing (for education providers) (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:

Gemma Quinn	Independent prescriber
David Packwood	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
Temilolu Odunaike	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the virtual approval visit

There were other groups involved with the approval process as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

John Unsworth	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland
Margaret Young	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland
Susan Alexander (Observer)	Internal quality coordinator	University of Sunderland

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Non-medical prescribing (Independent and Supplementary prescribing V300)
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Entitlement	Independent prescribing
First intake	01 July 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 15
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02185

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involved consideration of documentary evidence and a virtual 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	Comments
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	Not Required	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provider decided to move this event to a virtual (or remote) approval visit. In the table below, we have noted the meeting held, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Not Required	As the visit was virtual and the visitors were able to determine through the programme documentation, that many of the standards had been met, they decided it was unnecessary to meet with this group.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Not Required	As the visit was virtual and the visitors were able to determine through the programme documentation, that many of the standards had been met, they decided it was unnecessary to meet with this group.
Facilities and resources	Not Required	As the visit was virtual and the visitors were able to determine through the programme documentation, that many of the standards had been met, they decided it was unnecessary to meet with this group.
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 virtual 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 03 June 2020.

D.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure practice educators undertake regular training appropriate to the programme.

Reason: As part of their evidence for this standard, the education provider referred the visitors to the Facilitating Learning and Assessment in Practice section of their website. The visitors noted there is a PQC303 mentor training course for practice educators, however, there was no information to determine whether this was a mandatory programme for practice educators to attend, in order to be able to take on learners in practice-based learning. The visitors also could not determine whether regular refresher training and support was provided to practice educators.

At the visit, the practice educators informed the visitors that there is a “yellow book” they are required to read to prepare them for their role and that they have direct access to the programme leader if they had any questions. The visitors noted that there was no system in place to monitor whether the practice educators have read this book. The programme team also confirmed that there is currently no ongoing training available to practice educators but the programme leader is their main point of contact for any support needed.

From this information, the visitors could not determine how the education provider prepares practice educators in order for them to be able to support learning and assess learners effectively. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to clearly articulate how they will ensure practice educators undertake regular training appropriate to the programme.

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 01 June 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](#).