

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Edge Hill University
Name of programme(s)	MSci Nurse Paramedic, Full time
Approval visit date	11 – 12 March 2020
Case reference	CAS-15120-X4T4Z4

Contents

Section 1: Our regulatory approach	2
Section 2: Programme details.....	3
Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment.....	3
Section 4: Outcome from first review.....	4
Section 5: Outcome from second review	14
Section 6: Visitors’ recommendation.....	19

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:

Tristan Henderson	Paramedic
Vincent Clarke	Paramedic
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.

Anthony Turjansky	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Edge Hill University
Katherine Griffiths-Smith	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Edge Hill University
Maureen Harrison	Reviewer	Nursing and Midwifery Council
Rajeev Shrivastava	Internal panel member	Edge Hill University
Lorraine Partington	Internal panel member	Edge Hill University

Jenny Pinfield	External panel member	University of Worcester
Allen Bewley	Internal panel member	Service user and carer group, Edge Hill University

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSci Nurse Paramedic
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
Proposed first intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02169

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	Not Required

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	No – some key stakeholders were not present at this meeting, for example representatives of non-ambulance placements and paramedic Practice Educators
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 14 May 2020.

2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all applicants have sufficient information about the costs of the programme.

Reason: The visitors were aware from programme documentation and from discussions at the visit that learners were likely to incur significant extra costs from studying on the programme, notably in relation to the fact that the programme was situated between two campuses, at Manchester and Ormskirk. They considered from their initial review that this was not made sufficiently clear in programme documentation. At the visit they were able to discuss this with the programme team, who stated that a new document would be produced giving applicants full information. However, the visitors were not able to view this document, and so were unable to determine whether the standard was met. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence relating to how they will ensure that applicants have clear information about the programme costs, especially those related to the dual location of the programme.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the programme is fit for purpose with specific regard to how they ensure that all graduates will have a clear understanding of the paramedic profession and its particular demands, characteristics and requirements.

Reason: From the programme documentation and from discussions during the visit, the visitors were aware that the programme was aimed at developing a new profession, that of 'Nurse Paramedic'. This position was re-iterated throughout the visit and was presented as filling a gap in the health care system. The documentation presented this as being an 'integrated practitioner'. The briefing document for the visit identifies that: "the Team explained that the fourth year of study allows for a greater level of autonomy which in turn better equips graduates to join the workforce at an advanced stage".

The visitors were unclear what was meant by "advanced" in this context. The programme team suggested that this referred to the 'paramedic' skills being present in addition to nursing skills. The visitors were not clear how the concept of an 'integrated practitioner' was different to a dual registered nurse/paramedic. This meant that they were unable to make a determination about whether the education provider had a clear understanding of the unique and specific role of the paramedic, and hence whether the programme would create learners who could practise safely and effectively as paramedics. The HCPC as a regulator has a responsibility towards the paramedic profession, and the aim of HCPC visitors during an approval process is to ensure that learners who emerge from an approved programme will be able to practise safely and effectively within the paramedic profession as it currently exists.

The visitors, therefore, require further evidence of how the programme will ensure that learners are fully prepared to practise as paramedics.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the programme will be able to manage fifty learners per cohort.

Reason: Based on their review of programme documentation, the visitors had been working on the understanding that the education provider was seeking approval for thirty learners. However, in discussions with the senior team, the visitors were informed that the plan was for up to fifty learners per cohort to be admitted. Due to this information coming to light at the approval visit, the visitors considered that they had not had an opportunity to consider how the fifty learners would be appropriately managed, with regard to the following areas:

- Staffing and resources, including teaching space;
- Availability and capacity of practice-based learning.

In particular, the visitors noted that they had not been able to view formal or finalised agreements with partner ambulance services. In addition, the representatives from ambulance services who attended meetings with the HCPC panel did not appear to have a clear understanding of how the programme would work or of the organisation of

placements, notably that the majority of placements would be in non-ambulance settings.

In light of all of the above, the visitors were unable to determine whether the standard was met and require further evidence on how the fifty learners will be managed with respect to the above.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility 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 demonstrate how they will ensure that they have an appropriate process in place to appoint a suitable new programme lead if it becomes necessary for them to do so.

Reason: The education provider supplied evidence relating to staffing strategy, as well as curriculum vitae for some of the programme team, and a description of the responsibilities for the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme. However, this evidence did not include a clear description of what specific process was in place to recruit a new programme lead if it became necessary to do so. For example, it was not clear how the education provider would ensure that a person appointed to that role would have appropriate experience in running a health professional programme. The visitors considered that this was particularly important in light of the nature of the programme, which would enable learners to be dual registered as both paramedics, with the HCPC, and nurses, with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Taking all of this into account, the visitors were unable to determine whether the standard was met, and require further evidence relating to how the education provider would appoint a new programme lead if it becomes necessary to do so, and how they would ensure that this person was suitably qualified and experienced.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure ongoing regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers once the programme has started.

Reason: From the programme documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were aware that there had been collaboration with practice education providers during the development of the programme, for example regular meetings with local health authorities about their future staffing requirements and their amount of placement capacity. However, the visitors did not see evidence of a plan for ensuring that these relationships would continue to be regular and effective once the programme had started. They did not see, for example, dates for future meetings or ongoing terms of reference. They were therefore unable to determine whether the standard was met, and require further evidence demonstrating how the education provider will ensure that collaboration continues once the programme is running.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will continue to use their relationships with practice partners to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: As noted in the condition for SET 3.5 above, the visitors were aware that there had been meetings and ongoing relationships with likely providers of practice-based learning. In their evidence the education provider described how the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine practice learning centre had responsibility for securing sufficient and appropriate practice-based learning for healthcare programmes at the education provider. However, it was not clear to the visitors how exactly this would be achieved for this specific programme. They asked the senior team, the programme team and practice education partners about this at the visit and received verbal reassurance about their ability to secure sufficient availability and capacity. However, they did not receive clear information about what detailed steps would be taken to ensure appropriate placements for all learners. They considered that such detail was particularly important in light of the new information communicated at the visit about learner numbers (see the condition for SET 3.2).

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans two standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that there are appropriate staff from paramedic backgrounds, to appropriately contextualise learning for the paramedic profession, and support the delivery and achievement of the standards of proficiency for paramedics.

Reason: The education provider had supplied curriculum vitae for four members of staff, but the visitors were made aware at the visit that the education provider planned to draw on a large reservoir of staff. The visitors did not have information about these staff so were unable to determine whether they were appropriately qualified and experienced, although they were given verbal assurances about their suitability. The visitors had a particular interest in seeking this further information as they considered that there was a potential lack of specialist paramedic input into the programme, which is intended to provide dual registration. The programme team stated that they had undertaken a mapping exercise which determined a 95 per cent similarity in curriculum for paramedics and nurses, implying that only the remaining 5 per cent would need to be professionally differentiated. No evidence was provided to support the claimed 95% similarity. The visitors considered that this possibly indicated an inadequate understanding of the importance of paramedics' specific skills, knowledge and competencies, and so wished to be sure that staffing arrangements would strongly support the achievement and development of learners as future paramedics. They

therefore require further evidence relating to how the education provider will ensure that such staff are available and involved in the appropriate parts of the programme.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the programme will enable learners to meet the specific standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: As part of their evidence, the education provider submitted a SOPs mapping exercise. The visitors reviewed and this and were able to discuss learning outcomes with the programme team. From this review and from the discussions, the visitors considered that some of the learning outcomes were insufficiently specific to enable all learners to meet all SOPs for paramedics. It was not clear, for example, that the learning outcomes as written would require all learners to have had practice-based learning in ambulance settings. The visitors were particularly concerned that the attempt to craft learning outcomes relating to practical competencies that were generic enough to cover both paramedic and nursing specialisms would not capture the quite specific requirements laid out for paramedics in sections 13 and 14 of the HCPC standards of proficiency for paramedics. The visitors particularly highlighted the following SOPs:

- 13.6 understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention;
- 13.7 understand human anatomy and physiology, sufficient to recognise the nature and effects of injury or illness, and to conduct assessment and observation in order to form a differential diagnosis and establish patient management strategies;
- 14.1 know the theories and science that underpin the theory and principles of paramedic practice;
- 14.3 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively;
- 14.5 know the indications and contra-indications of using specific paramedic techniques in pre-hospital and out-of-hospital care, including their limitations and modifications;
- 14.6 be able to modify and adapt practice to meet the clinical needs of patients within the emergency and urgent care environment;
- 14.7 know how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of patients, their relatives and carers, when presented in the emergency and urgent care environment;

In discussions with the programme team this difficulty was acknowledged but it was not clear to the visitors what would be done to mitigate the risk of learners not being able to meet the paramedic SOPs. The visitors note that all graduates of this programme would be eligible to apply for registration as a paramedic on receiving the named award. Taking all of this into account, they were unable to determine whether the standard was met and require further evidence about how the education provider will ensure that all learners will be enabled to meet the SOPs for paramedics.

4.3 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the programme will reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base of the paramedic profession.

Reason: Based on their review of programme documentation and on discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that a lot of the programme material was generic, with the intention that this would be applied across learning required to register as a nurse and a paramedic. This was acknowledged by the education provider, as noted in the condition under SET 3.10 above. This was not necessarily a problem, as there is considerable shared underlying knowledge between the two professions. However, there are many areas where the application of that knowledge, and the way it is incorporated into professional practice, is very different between the two professions. The visitors considered that at present they did not see how the education provider was planning to ensure that all learners gained a clear understanding of the knowledge base and expectations of the paramedic profession. They were given verbal assurances about this at the visit but did see relevant evidence. This was important because all graduates of this programme would be eligible to apply for registration as a paramedic on receiving the named award. They therefore require further evidence relating to how the education provider can ensure this.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the curriculum will remain relevant to current practice.

Reason: Based on their review of programme documentation and on discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that a lot of the programme material was generic, with the intention that this would be applied across learning required to register as a nurse and a paramedic. This was acknowledged by the education provider, as noted in the condition under SET 3.10 above. This was not necessarily a problem, as there is considerable shared underlying knowledge between the two professions. However, there are many areas where the application of that knowledge, and the way it is incorporated into professional practice, is very different between the two professions. The visitors considered that at present they did not see how the education provider was planning to ensure that the curriculum remained relevant to current paramedic practice. They were given verbal assurances about this at the visit but did see relevant evidence about how, for example, specialist paramedic staff would be used to maintain the clinical currency of the programme. This was important because all graduates of this programme would be eligible to apply for registration as a paramedic on receiving the named award. They therefore require further evidence relating to how the education provider can ensure this.

4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the programme will teach, present and integrate paramedic-specific content in a way that ensures that all learners are prepared to integrate theory and practice as paramedics.

Reason: Based on their review of programme documentation and on discussions at the visit, the visitors considered that some aspects of the programme were not sufficiently

tailored towards the specific requirements of paramedic learners, and would not enable them to develop and maintain their understanding of the demands and expectations of the profession. They noted that a lot of the programme material was generic, with the intention that this would be applied across learning required to register as a nurse and a paramedic. This was acknowledged by the education provider, as noted in the condition under SET 3.10 above. This was not necessarily a problem, as there is considerable shared underlying knowledge between the two professions. However, there are many areas where the application of that knowledge, and the way it is incorporated into professional practice, is very different between the two professions. The visitors considered that the programme did not currently appear to take sufficient account of this. The visitors note that all graduates of this programme would be eligible to apply for registration as a paramedic on receiving the named award. They require further evidence relating to how the education provider will ensure that all learners will be enabled to understand how general medical knowledge is integrated into their particular practice.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they enable service users and learners to give appropriate consent in those parts of the programme where it may be necessary to do so.

Reason: The education provider submitted evidence for this standard that included information about how learners were prepared for practice-based learning. However, it was not clear to the visitors from this information what process the education provider had in place for specifically ensuring that appropriate consent was obtained from service users and learners, where necessary. The visitors were not able to seek clarification on this at the visit due to time pressures.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they communicate to learners their policy on attendance, and in particular how they expect learners to proceed if they have missed learning and teaching activities.

Reason: The education provider submitted as evidence a paragraph from a document given to learners, which mentioned attendance requirements, stating that 100% attendance was expected. The visitors asked about this at the visit and the programme team informed them that the 100% requirement was there to set high expectations. The visitors considered that this was reasonable, but they noted that the education provider did not appear to have communicated to learners what they should do if they missed learning and teaching activities for legitimate reasons such as illness. There was no indication of what steps learners ought to take or what would be done to support them. The visitors were therefore unable to determine that the standard was met and require further evidence regarding how the education provider would support learners.

5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all learners are enabled to access an appropriate range of practice-based learning, specifically including ambulance-based placements, to support their achieving the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: The evidence submitted by the education provider included information about the kinds of placement that would be available to learners. It specifically mentioned, for example, ambulance trusts. However, from their review of this documentation the visitors were not clear that learners would be obliged to complete a placement with an ambulance trust or in other settings where paramedics would normally be expected to work, e.g. in a community care setting. These were presented as options that would be available, or as examples of the kind of practice-based learning that was available, and which learners would be able to choose in co-ordination with the education provider. The visitors considered that there was a lack of clarity about whether learners would be guaranteed an appropriate breadth of experience, because it appeared that they would be able to complete the practice-based learning components of the programme and achieve the award without having been on an ambulance placement or under supervision from a paramedic in an urgent / primary care setting. The visitors asked the programme team to clarify this but did not receive a definitive answer. This was partly related to the dual registration nature of the programme, which necessitated a wide range of practice-based learning being available but also limited the opportunities for professional specialisation. The visitors considered that from the HCPC perspective it would not be appropriate for a learner to receive an award that leads to eligibility to apply for registration as paramedic without having undertaken practice-based learning in an ambulance setting supervised by a paramedic.

They were therefore unable to determine whether the standard was met and require further evidence relating to how the education provider will ensure that learners have access to an appropriate range of practice-based learning to enable them to meet the SOPs. They noted that there was a potential link to the condition under SET 4.1 above.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans two standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Reason: In their evidence for this standard the education provider submitted documents explaining their understanding of practice-based learning and descriptions of relevant roles. Reference was made to the general role of the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine practice learning centre. The visitors considered that this was useful information, but that it did not provide them with a clear understanding of how the education provider intended to audit practice-based learning on an ongoing basis for

this specific programme. In discussions at the visit, the programme team gave verbal assurances that they had a process for finding practice-based learning placements, that they would be in close touch with placement providers, and that problems that arose could be raised through various channels, both formal and informal. However, the visitors were not clear from this what kind of formal ongoing process would be in place for ensuring that placement settings continued to provide high quality practice-based learning which would support learners' achievement on the programme, and would be safe and supportive. They therefore were unable to determine that the standard was met and require further evidence about how the education provider's placement quality monitoring will work.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

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

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: With regard to the practice educators used as part of the programme, the education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that:

- There are adequate numbers with appropriate qualifications and experience;
- They have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning; and
- The practice educators received regular suitable training.

Reason: The education provider submitted evidence for this standard describing their understanding of the role of the practice educator, their expectations of the role, and the way in which they intend practice educators to work. The visitors considered that this evidence was useful and appropriate insofar as it went, but it was not clear to them how the education provider would ensure that the practice educators would be suitable for their roles, and how they would ensure that they remain suitable. There was not sufficient evidence relating to processes for determining ongoing suitability, so they could not determine whether the standard was met. In discussions at the visit the education provider gave verbal reassurances that this would be done through co-operation with practice partners, but the visitors require further evidence outlining how this will work. The fact that the visitors were not able to meet with practice educators at the visit made it harder for them to make a clear and appropriate judgment.

5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that learners and practice educators have the information they need, in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.

Reason: The evidence submitted for this standard included general information about the organisation of practice-based learning, which was organised at the institutional level by the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine practice learning centre. However, the visitors did not see specific reference in this documentation to how learners and practice educators for this programme would be appropriately prepared for practice-based learning. Verbal assurances were given at the visit that relevant information would be sent to learners and practice educators well in advance. The learners from existing programmes within the Faculty did not raise specific concerns about this aspect of their experience. However, the visitors did consider that they required further evidence about what process would be used to ensure that information was always supplied in a timely manner, particularly in light of their outstanding concern about audit of practice-based learning as noted in the condition under SET 5.3 above.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors were aware from the documentation provided that learners in practice-based learning would be assessed using a PAD. In discussion with the programme team, it became apparent that the NMC had very clear requirements related to who could sign a student's PAD in a summative capacity, i.e. that the 'sign-off' must be completed by a Registered Nurse. The visitors considered that this was not appropriate for the sign-off of competencies considered to be 'paramedic specific' or for 'shared' competencies to be 'signed off' solely in a nursing setting by a nurse practice educator. The visitors require evidence of students' PADs needing to be 'signed off' by a paramedic in the context of undertaking the traditional paramedic role, i.e. in ambulance-based practice or primary care under the supervision of a paramedic. The visitors require this evidence to be reassured that the protected title of 'paramedic', which could be used by graduate registrants, remains recognisable in the current context of entry-level paramedics working in the UK health industry.

6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that practice educators have been appropriately prepared to use the practice assessment document (PAD).

Reason: The visitors were aware from the documentation provided that learners in practice-based learning would be assessed using a PAD. However, they were not clear from the evidence submitted how the education provider intended to ensure that any staff member on placement who might have input into PAD assessment, whether formative or summative, had been appropriately prepared to do so. They considered that this was important because if there was not consistency and accuracy in such assessment across all learners, then the PAD would not be providing an objective, fair and reliable measure of individuals' progression and achievement. The visitors raised the issue with the programme team and were given verbal assurances that it would be part of the general training received by practice educators. However, as they did not

see specific evidence about how this would be incorporated into such training, they were unable to determine that the standard was met, and require further evidence relating to how practice educators will be enabled to use the PAD appropriately.

6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all assessment methods used are appropriate to measuring the learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors were aware from the documentation that several of the modules were assessed solely by a twenty-minute oral examination. The visitors considered that, while this could be an appropriate way for the education provider to organise assessment, they would need to see further information about how the education provider ensured that assessors using this method would be able to assess all the learning outcomes appropriately and fairly. In the absence of such guidance, they could not determine whether assessing modules in this way would ensure that learning outcomes were appropriately measured. Therefore, they require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that all assessments are appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes, whether or not they decide to continue with using the oral examination for the modules in question.

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.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

Second response to conditions required

The education provider responded to the conditions set out in section 4. Following their consideration of this response, the visitors were satisfied that the conditions for several of the standards were met. However, they were not satisfied that the following conditions were met, for the reasons detailed below. Therefore, in order for the visitors to be satisfied that the following conditions are met, they require further evidence.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the programme is fit for purpose with specific regard to how they ensure that all graduates

will have a clear understanding of the paramedic profession and its particular demands, characteristics and requirements.

Reason condition not met at this time: The original condition arose from the education provider's apparent intention for the programme to produce a new type of professional, the nurse-paramedic. Its aim was to ensure that the visitors were confident in the education provider's understanding that from the HCPC perspective our concern is that learners from a programme producing paramedic registrants meet the SOPs for the paramedic profession as currently constituted. This was why the condition highlighted the need to ensure that graduates had "a clear understanding of the profession and its particular demands, characteristics and requirements".

The education provider sought to meet this condition by demonstrating that there was senior management support for the programme, and support for the programme from their ambulance service partners. The visitors considered that this evidence went some way towards meeting the standard.

However, the visitors were not clear that the evidence supplied constituted sufficient evidence that the ambulance services understood the distinctive aspects of the programme. This was a concern because the ambulance services would need to clearly understand the challenges associated with the dual-registration components of the programme, in order to ensure that practice educators' supervision and assessment of learners was appropriate.

Suggested documentation: Evidence to demonstrate that partner ambulance services are supportive of the programme and its structure and aims, and are aware of the distinctive requirements facing learners on the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure ongoing regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers once the programme has started.

Reason condition not met at this time: In their evidence for this condition the education provider submitted documents relating to the meetings and other contacts between the education provider and some of their practice education partners, and a record of a meeting with the senior team at an internal validation event. However, the visitors considered that the evidence they had seen was focused on contacts with providers of nursing practice-based learning, and did not contain sufficient evidence regarding the relationship between the education provider and the ambulance services in particular. The original condition was focused on the need for the education provider to demonstrate how they would ensure continuing effective collaboration with their practice partners once the programme was established, and the visitors did not see evidence in the conditions response that there would be an ongoing relationship with the partner ambulance services. They were aware that the education provider anticipated difficulties with maintaining these relationships due to the COVID-19 situation, but they considered that it would still be reasonable for the education provider to demonstrate their planning for how to manage and maintain those relationships.

Suggested documentation: Evidence to show how the education provider will ensure ongoing effective collaboration with providers of ambulance service practice-based learning in particular, once the programme is underway, for example memorandums of understanding or similar.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will continue to use their relationships with practice partners to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason condition not met at this time: In their evidence for this condition the education provider submitted a placement capacity action plan and a document relating to meetings with providers of practice-based learning. This went some way towards meeting the condition as it showed the education provider were engaging with the need to ensure availability and capacity through their contacts with practice partners. However, the visitors did not see evidence showing clear agreements with ambulance services whom the visitors understood would be taking learners from the programme. This would be required so that the visitors could understand the details of how the education provider will work with ambulance services to deliver placements. This was particularly important in light of the issues noted under SET 5.2 around the necessity for the programme to deliver ambulance placements.

Suggested documentation: Formal agreements between the education provider and ambulance placement partners showing that there will be sufficient practice-based learning for all learners.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they enable service users and learners to give appropriate consent in those parts of the programme where it may be necessary to do so.

Reason condition not met at this time: The education provider submitted a narrative of how they would approach the question of gaining consent, which referred to and was based upon a passage from the programme handbook. This built on what had been contained in the original submission: detailed information about the programme's approach to simulation, but not any material specifically addressing the issue of processes for obtaining appropriate consent. The additional evidence described to learners and others what would be required on the programme and what kind of activities they might need to be comfortable undertaking. However the visitors considered that this in itself did not constitute an effective process for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. It did not make it clear to learners whether and at what points they could give and withdraw consent, and it did not clearly address gaining consent from service users. The visitors were therefore unable to determine whether the standard was met.

Suggested documentation: Evidence to show what process will be used to obtain appropriate consent from learners and service users, including how they are informed of the possibilities of opting out of certain activities, and how this will be managed.

5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all learners are enabled to access an appropriate range of practice-based learning, specifically including ambulance-based placements, to support their achieving the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason condition not met at this time: The education provider supplied learner placement mapping and a sample learner journey, showing that learners would have access to up to five ambulance-based placements. While this was an appropriate exercise for demonstrating the possible range of appropriate ambulance-based practice-based learning settings, it was not clear to the visitors that all learners on the programme would be guaranteed access to ambulance-based placements. The commentary in the education provider's response mapping document suggested to the visitors that they did not see ambulance-based placements as essential to the programme. For example, the response noted that the HCPC does not specifically require such placements. While this is true, the crux of the issue highlighted in the condition is that learners must meet the SOPs for paramedics before they can be eligible for registration, and that there are certain SOPs which the visitors consider learners would need ambulance-based placements in order to meet. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 14.4 know how to position or immobilise patients correctly for safe and effective interventions
- 14.5 know the indications and contra-indications of using specific paramedic techniques in pre-hospital and out-of-hospital care, including their limitations and modifications
- 14.6 be able to modify and adapt practice to meet the clinical needs of patients within the emergency and urgent care environment
- 14.7 know how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of patients, their relatives and carers, when presented in the emergency and urgent care environment
- 14.8 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

The visitors therefore require clarification around how the education provider will ensure that these SOPs are met through practice-based learning in the ambulance setting.

Suggested documentation: Evidence to demonstrate that all learners will have guaranteed access to ambulance placements or, if learners are not to be guaranteed such placements, how the education provider will ensure that the SOPs related to ambulance practice will be met.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: With regard to the practice educators used as part of the programme, the education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that:

- There are adequate numbers with appropriate qualifications and experience;
- They have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning; and
- The practice educators received regular suitable training.

Reason condition not met at this time: The education provider submitted a document giving details about the practice educators that were available to them in the region, and the training opportunities to which those educators had access. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider was able to monitor the training status of those practice educators, and ensure further training as appropriate, and so that SET 5.7 was met. However, they considered that there were still not a sufficient number of practice educators with specific paramedic expertise available. Many of those identified as practice educators within the ambulance setting were nurses, and the visitors were not clear how the education provider intended to ensure that these individuals would have appropriate qualifications and experience, or relevant skills, to support effective learning. They were not clear how the education provider intended to ensure that these individuals would be able to supervise learners in placement in the manner required by the standard.

Suggested documentation: Evidence to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that those supervising learners in practice-based learning have appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to support learners achieving the SOPs for paramedics.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Reason condition not met at this time: For this condition the education provider submitted detailed evidence relating to the practice assessment document (PAD) and to their arrangements and expectations around who would have responsibilities for completing the PAD for learners. The visitors considered that this clarified the situation around who would be signing off which practical components. However, they noted that there was not a specific requirement for a paramedic practice educator to sign off for the vast majority of the competencies – only the 5% that the education provider considered to be paramedic-specific had this requirement. The visitors considered, therefore, that it remained unclear how the education provider would ensure that competencies were being signed off appropriately, that is in such a way that they could be sure that the learners were able to meet the standards of proficiency for paramedics. There were discussions at the visit about the extent of the crossover between nursing and paramedic skills and competencies, and the visitors considered that the education provider's understanding of the extent of this crossover risked putting learners in a

position where they had received sign-off on competencies but these had not been appropriately achieved in the paramedic context. They therefore are unable to determine that the standard is met.

Suggested documentation: Evidence to show how the education provider intends to ensure that all learners' practical competencies are being appropriately signed off by someone who understands the paramedic context for those competencies.

Section 6: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, and the request for further evidence set out in section 5, 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 20 August 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](#).