

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Metanoia Institute
Validating body	Middlesex University
Name of programme(s)	Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies (DCPsych), Part time
Approval visit date	15 May 2020
Case reference	CAS-14574-R3M6S4

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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.

Through undertaking this process, we have noted areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes in section 6 of this report.

## 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:

David Packwood	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
Jai Shree Adhyaru	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
John Archibald	HCPC executive

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies (DCPsych)
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Profession	Practitioner psychologist
Modality	Counselling psychologist
First intake	01 January 2001
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 18
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02097

Relevant programme interaction with our approval and monitoring processes is summarised below:

- 2016-17 (audit) – the visitors judged that they saw insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the programme continued to meet a number of the standards. The Education and Training Committee (ETC) agreed with the recommendation of the visitors, that an approval visit was required to appropriately assess how the programme continued to meet all the standards.
- 2017-18 (approval visit) – we visited the programme in June 2018, and the programme was re-approved in January 2019. The visitors were satisfied that the programme, which was recommended for approval subject to conditions, should be approved as the conditions were met at a threshold level.

However, at the conclusion of the approval process, although they were satisfied that the standards were met at a threshold level, the visitors remained concerned with some aspects of the programme. Particularly, this was in regards to the number of issues raised through the approval process, considering that the programme was already approved. Because of the education provider’s difficulty in achieving the conditions, the ETC decided that they would require further assurance that measures put into place to meet the conditions were effective in practice.

ETC did not consider that the normal monitoring cycle, being two years until a monitoring submission would be made by the programme, would be suitable in this case. They therefore decided that it would be more efficient for the education provider and the HCPC to conduct a visit. This visit was to take place following one internal monitoring cycle and involve the consideration of documentary evidence along with the visit. Whilst the visit was intended to pay particular focus on the measures put in place to meet the conditions, all standards were to be considered.

### 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

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):

<b>Group</b>	<b>Met</b>
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Not Required
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 July 2020.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of how they work in partnership with those who provide practice-based learning.

**Reason:** To meet this standard, the visitors were informed there are over 400 practice-based learning settings available for learners and that the education provider had appointed a placement co-ordinator. At the visit, practice educators informed the visitors they would like to talk more with the education provider. The visitors were informed the education provider holds annual practice-based learning education days and received the agenda for the last day. The visitors saw that the day included a discussion about how the placements are organised and the education provider's requirements of practice-based learning. The visitors were also informed 35 practice education providers attended the last practice-based learning education day. However, the visitors were unclear about who is invited to this day, and how attendance is monitored and what steps are taken for those who do not attend.

The visitors recognised that due to the high number of practice-based learning settings available for learners, it may not be possible to receive feedback and information from them all. However, the visitors were unclear whether the education provider has a formal system to incorporate feedback, and to work with all active practice education providers. The visitors were also unable to see information which demonstrates the education provider has structures in place which are available to all practice education providers to ensure there is a partnership and ongoing relationship.

The visitors were therefore unsure, due to this number of practice-based learning settings available for learners, how the education provider can effectively collaborate with these practice education providers. The visitors need more evidence of how the education provider works in formal partnership with all active practice education providers.

### **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.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they formally ensure all practice educators are prepared, through training and that there is regular training and support, so they can support learning and assess learners effectively.

**Reason:** To meet this standard, the visitors were informed prior to the visit the education provider passed information to practice educators about their role through the placement handbook and that training is offered both on Placement Providers' Day and Supervisors' Day, which take place annually.

From this information, the visitors considered there was no formal mechanism to ensure all practice educators received regular training, either when they start to undertake the role or as refresher training.

The visitors were also aware the programme had undergone changes as a result of revalidation. They considered it was imperative that all practice educators are aware of these changes to the programme so they are able to deliver the learning outcomes and work to the individual needs of learners.

The visitors were unclear whether this approach is effective in ensuring all practice educators are appropriately prepared so they can support learning and assess learners effectively. The visitors therefore need further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider formally ensures all practice educators are prepared, through training and that there is regular training and support, so they can support learning and assess learners effectively.

### **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 provide further documents to ensure practice educators understand their role and what is expected and required for the practice-based learning to be safe and effective.

**Reason:** To meet this standard, the visitors were informed that learners and practice educators receive the placement handbook prior to practice learning. The visitors were made aware the placement handbook contained information about the placement process, and how to find a suitable placement. The visitors were satisfied that learners had access to information they needed in order to be prepared for practice-based learning. However, the visitors considered that due to the general nature of the information contained within the placement handbook, they were unclear whether it would ensure practice educators knew and understood their role, and the expectations of the programme in regards to the learning outcomes to be achieved by learners. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider sets and communicates clear expectations about practice-based learning to practice educators.

## 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 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](#).

## Section 6: Future considerations for the programme(s)

We include this section to note areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes. Education providers do not need to respond to this section at this time, but should consider whether to engage with the HCPC around these areas in the future.

The visitors considered that the conditions were now met at threshold. The visitors noted that the education provider is also currently developing the PEP Introductory Pack into a "development package" for practice educators, to ensure they formally ensure all practice educators are prepared through training and that there is regular training and support, so they can support learning and assess learners effectively. This development package is due to be available by the end of January 2021.

The visitors also noted that the education provider proposed to develop the PEP introductory pack into a package of mandatory training for practice educators, to ensure practice educators understand their role and what is expected and required for the practice based learning to be safe and effective. This package of mandatory training is due to be available from October 2020.

The education provider should consider whether these changes will impact on the way the programme meets the SETs, and if appropriate submit a major change notification form. The visitors wished to highlight these areas for those visitors looking at future assessments.