

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Plymouth
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science, Full time
Approval visit date	28 April 2020
Case reference	CAS-15792-T8Z4J2

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### Executive Summary

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

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

## Section 1: Our regulatory approach

### Our standards

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

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

### How we make our decisions

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

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

### HCPC panel

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

Stephen McDonald	Biomedical scientist
Pradeep Agrawal	Biomedical scientist
Patrick Armsby	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the virtual 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.

Hannah Wisdom	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Plymouth
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## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)

Profession	Biomedical scientist
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 24
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02190

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

### Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

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

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

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	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Facilities and resources	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They

		determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Senior staff	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Practice educators	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
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 10 June 2020.

#### 4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

**Condition:** The education provider must show how they will ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

**Reason:** To evidence this standard in the documentary submission the education provider highlighted that the programme sits within the Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences. As such they stated there is opportunity for interprofessional education (IPE) across the faculty. They highlighted that learners will experience a range of professions when working in multidisciplinary teams in practice-based learning. However they did not state how they would ensure that learners' experiences would be consistent to meet the standard. The education provider highlighted a module that would provide learners an interprofessional opportunity in the theoretical part of the programme. When the visitors reviewed this module they could

not see how learners would learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

At the visit the visitors explored the IPE opportunities within the programme. The programme team explained that they were exploring developing IPE opportunities with Nurses, Dentists, Doctors and other allied health professionals. However, these opportunities were at an early stage of development and were not implemented into the programme yet. The programme team explained that that learners would take part in IPE in stage 1 and 2 of the programme. They discussed working with Physiologists and working alongside other learners to as part of their learning around Pathology. The programme team did not confirm the nature of these sessions and the professions that would be involved in them. This standard is designed to ensure that learners take part in meaningful IPE to ensure that they are prepared to work with other professionals and across professions for the benefit of service users and carers. Currently the education provider has not detailed how they will ensure all learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions. The education provider must detail the activities in the IPE sessions and confirm the other professions that they deem relevant that take part in these activities, to show learners are taking part in meaningful IPE.

### **Recommendations**

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

#### **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.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should formalise information around criminal conviction checks, health requirements and the assessment of prior learning process to be available for potential applicants.

**Reason:** In the documentary submission the visitors were able to see that there was a programme webpage which is available for potential applicants. The visitors were able to see standard information available for learners to make an informed choice. However, they did not see specific information around criminal conviction checks, health requirements and assessment of prior experience and learning (APEL) on this page. The visitors were able to confirm that there were the relevant procedures and process in place for these areas. The programme team confirmed that they would be updating the information for learners in line with this information. Therefore the visitors recommend formalising the information provided to learners and including the information around criminal conviction checks, health requirements and the APEL process.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should ensure that learners are appropriately informed about management and lines of responsibility within the programme.

**Reason:** In the SETs mapping document it was stated that a programme leader would be professionally responsible for the programme and that they were in the process of employing a new head of school. At the visit the visitors enquired about the progress being made in the new appointment and how they would be involved in the management of the programme. The information they provided and the named person holding professional responsibility for the programme differed from the documentation. The visitors considered the information provided in the meeting was sufficient to meet the standard, but they recommend that the education provider formalises this information to ensure that learners have a clear understanding of the lines of responsibility within the programme.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should continue to develop and formalise further opportunities for service users and carers involvement in the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentary submission the education provider indicated that they were currently developing further opportunities for their Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) within the programme. They also detailed how this PPI were currently involved in the interview stage for the programme and in a workshop for one of the modules. Therefore the visitors considered the standard to be met at a threshold level. However, the visitors recommend that the education provider continues to develop opportunities for this group to be involved in the programme beyond the interview stage. This would allow them to contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme and make sure that learners completing it are fit to practice.

## **Section 5: Visitors' recommendation**

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

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 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](#).