Approval process report

Canterbury Christ Church University, Dietetics 2025-26

Executive Summary

This is a report of the ongoing process to approve a Dietetics programme at Canterbury Christ Church University. This report captures the process we have undertaken to date to assess the institution and programme against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

We have

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area. Two standards have been referred to stage 2 review.
- Reviewed the programme against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme should be approved.
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme is approved

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
    - Quality theme 1 – partnership working with the practice education providers to ensure regular and effective collaboration. The education provider submitted evidence which demonstrated there are systems and processes in place as evident through stakeholder meeting minutes, and support from wider education provider practice-based learning support departments. These evidenced ongoing quality and effectiveness.
    - Quality theme 2 – capacity and availability of practice-based learning. The education provider submitted evidence which reassured us that there would be sufficient practice-based learning for all learners in their first year and plans in place to increase practice-based learning for the 2027/28 academic year. To ensure plans are actioned as expected, we have referred this to a focused review in sis months.
    - Quality theme 3 - adequate number of appropriately qualified staff for all learners. The education provider supplied evidence for a maximum of ten learners to be recruited in 2026/27 and 20 in the 2027/28 academic year making a total of 30 learners. The evidence demonstrated that the current staff and their recruitment plans would ensure adequate number of staff for the proposed learner numbers.
    - Quality theme 4 - lecturers have the relevant specialist skills, knowledge and expertise. The education provider submitted their process of recruiting

appropriate educators with adequate skills mix to teach the breadth of the curriculum.
    - Quality theme 5 – effective and appropriate specialist physical resources. The education provider submitted evidence for additional resources which demonstrated that there would be appropriate specialist physical resources to support the required learning and teaching activities on the programme.
    - Quality theme 6 – practice-based learning is integral to the programme. The education provider submitted additional evidence demonstrating there is adequate support to prepare learners for practice-based learning. It also demonstrated that practice-based learning was structured in a way that taught and practice-based learning are integrated across the three progressive stages, thereby making practice-based learning an integral part of the programme.
    - Quality theme 7 – appropriate entry requirements to the programme. The education provider submitted appropriate evidence demonstrating that the entry criteria are appropriately mapped to the level and content of the programme and would ensure learners are able to meet our standards for registration once they have completed the programme.
    - Quality theme 8 – ensuring learning outcomes can be met by the end of the programme. The education provider submitted updated standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping and handbooks demonstrating that learners would be able to meet the learning outcomes and the SOPs for dietitians upon completing the programme.
    - Quality theme 9 – demonstration of the expectations associated with being a regulated professional. The education provider submitted updated module descriptors which demonstrated that the standards of conduct, performance and ethics are clearly embedded in the Advanced Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition module and within practice-based learning modules. This reassured us that learners who complete the programme successfully will be able to meet the expectations associated with being a regulated professional.
    - Quality theme 10 - the structure and range of practice-based learning. Updated Dietetic Placement Handbooks were submitted which demonstrated how the structure and the range of practice-based learning across each stage of the programme would support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs.
    - Quality theme 11 – appropriateness of the assessment strategy and design. The education provider made changes to their assessment strategy and design which reassured us that these would ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for dietitians.
- The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
    - Further development of the use of Experts by Experience (EbEs) in simulation. The education provider noted this new development through stage 1. From the evidence provided through stages 1 and 2 of the assessment, there was not sufficient information provided to assess the

change to understand how EbEs are involved in simulation. Therefore, we have decided to refer this to the education provider's next performance review which is scheduled for 2027/28 academic year.
    - Availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners in the second cohort. Throughout the assessment, we are satisfied there would be sufficient practice -based learning for learners in the first cohort. However, we could not determine that the education provider's plans to ensure practice-based learning for up to 20 learners in the second cohort would be actioned. Therefore, to manage the risk, the visitors recommend that a focused review is undertaken within six months to assess whether the plans in place have effectively ensured the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for the additional learners.
- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. The approval process was not referred from another process
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • whether the programme(s) is approved, and • whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review will be in the 2027-28 academic year • Subject to the Panel's decision, we will undertake further investigations as per section 5

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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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.

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

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

Providers and programmes are approved on an open-ended basis, subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)

- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

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 design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view on our website.

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Sarah Illingworth	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Susan Lennie	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 13 HCPC-approved programmes across seven professions, including two Postgraduate Independent and Supplementary Prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1998.

The proposed programme will sit within the School of Nursing, Midwifery, Allied and Public Health which is where their other existing approved HCPC programmes sit.

The education provider last engaged with the performance review process in 2023/24 academic year. We were satisfied with their overall performance. However, there were a couple of areas that were referred to their next scheduled performance review. The Education and Training Committee agreed with the visitors' recommendation of three years review period and their next scheduled performance review is in the academic year 2027/28 for the reasons below:

- In September 2024, the education provider launched a Student and Academic Services redesign project. This was to enhance the quality of academic experience and learner support and resources and was implemented by June 2025. As the timelines involved lay outside of the review period for the performance review, the visitors recommended the education provider reflect on the implementation as part of their next engagement with the performance review process.
- The data we received for the education provider indicated learner satisfaction through the NSS positivity score in 2023 was 63%, against a benchmark of 75%. This suggested the provider was performing below sector norms. Also, when compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance had dropped by 6.3%. The visitors considered there was a sizable difference between the data point and benchmark figure and recognised the education provider undertook work in this area. The visitors recommended the education provider reflect on the steps being put in place to develop and encourage feedback and satisfaction as part of the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process.

The education provider's most recent approval was for their Master of Science Occupational Therapy (pre-registration), Master of Science Physiotherapy (pre-registration), and MSc Speech and Language Therapy Full time programmes. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards were met, and the programmes were approved by the Education and Training Committee in August 2025.

The education provider engaged with the programme closure process in the 2023-24 academic year to close the BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy, Full time programme. The last graduation date of this programme is December 2026.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Occupational therapy	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2000
	Operating Department Practitioner	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2009
	Paramedic	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2011
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2018
	Practitioner psychologist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1998
	Radiographer	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2004
	Speech and language therapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2018
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2019

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Learner number capacity	1239	1264	2026	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted

				through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.
Learner non-continuation	7%	7%	2021-22	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there was no impact on SETs considered, and the data showed the education provider is performing as expected. More recent data (2022/23 and 2023/24) also shows the education provider is performing above the benchmark in this area.
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	92%	91%	2021-22	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's

				performance has dropped by 2%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there was no impact on SETs considered. Also, more recent data (2022/23) shows significant improvement of 4% and that the education is now performing above sector norms.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2023	The definition of a Silver TEF award is “Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education.” We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the data shows the education provider is performing well in this area.
Learner satisfaction	82.4%	77.5%	2025	This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year’s data point, the education provider’s performance has improved by 5%. We did not explore this data point through this

				assessment because, although the data point is lower than the benchmark, the data over the years shows consistent improvement. We will continue to monitor the data through our regular monitoring processes.
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	3 years	2024/25	The education provider engaged with the performance review process in 2024/25 and were given a 3-year review period which means their next performance review is in 2027/28. As noted above there were two areas referred to their next scheduled performance review.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

<u>Admissions</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Information for applicants** –
    - Information related to the admissions process is available on the education provider's website on the Study Here webpages for applicants. There are separate webpages for undergraduate programmes and postgraduate programmes. The education provider's Admission and Recruitment policy demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities.
    - There is also an online portal where information relating to start dates, timetables and induction can be found. This information is sent as a link to applicants when they are accepted onto a programme.

    - All admissions requirements are reviewed at School and programme levels annually as part of the Periodic Review process and any updates are applied at the start of each admissions cycle.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
    - The education provider has policies in place for admissions and these are detailed on their website in relation to programme entry requirements. All applicants are required to demonstrate English language proficiency which they noted is consistent with HCPC requirements for eligibility for entry to the Register. Details of this is provided on their website.
    - The education provider noted there are integrated additional screening questions for dietetics-specific practice-based learning readiness.
    - The Admissions policy states the requirement for applicants to complete the relevant health and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Character and health suitability processes are in line with existing ones for their other HCPC-approved provision. Applicants who become learners are required to undertake an Occupational Health assessment to ensure safe participation in practice learning environments.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
    - The education provider has processes in place to assess applicants' prior learning and experience and details of this are outlined in the Regulations for Taught Awards document. All applications for prior learning and experience for entry onto HCPC approved programmes must comply with this.
    - Oversight and approval of the management of all recognition of prior learning (RPL) applications is delegated by the Academic Board to the Academic Quality Committee. The School Quality Sub-Committee (SQSC) is responsible for reviewing and approving or rejecting RPL applications in accordance with professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) requirements. Any variations to University RPL regulations required by PSRB programmes must be approved through the Additional Course Regulations process, as set out in the School PSRB Course Policy.
    - All RPL applications require learners to submit a portfolio demonstrating achievement of the relevant learning outcomes at the appropriate level, with guidance provided by the programme team in advance. RPL credit is awarded by the education provider on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners and subject to approval by the External Examiner. Once authorised by the School, the portfolio is

reviewed by the External Examiner, and credit is awarded only if approval is granted.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
    - The education provider is involved with a range of initiatives relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. These initiatives include the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan and Stonewall membership.
    - The University Strategic Framework – Vision 2030 outlines the education provider's aims and objectives to work towards a more inclusive environment. There is a particular focus on widening participation and working and supporting learners from under-represented backgrounds. To support this area further, they also have an Access and Participation Plan.
    - There are several policies which aim to support and encourage a diverse and equal learning environment. These include the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, University Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27, Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy and Dyslexia Support.
    - In line with the institutional policies, the education provider noted that the new programme will embed:
        - Inclusive curriculum design
        - Representation in case studies
        - Cultural competence within nutrition practice
        - Widening participation recruitment
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

<u>Management and governance</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Sustainability of provision** –
    - Sustainability is assured through cohort sizes aligned with financial modelling, compliance with any staff: student ratio set by relevant professional bodies, and shared simulation and anatomical resources across the allied health professions (AHP).
    - The University Academic Portfolio Committee oversees the development, expansion, and renewal of the education provider's academic portfolio. This work aligns with annually updated School Business Plans, which include learner number planning and analysis of staff-to-student ratios. These processes ensure that programmes are appropriately resourced with the right number and mix of staff to support learner experience.

    - Programmes are developed in line with the requirements of the Vision 2030 and University Learning and Teaching and Assessment Strategy. To support this, the University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit developed guidance to assist programme teams with designing programmes.
    - Programmes are designed in a way that demonstrates alignment between learning outcomes and assessment at higher education level, to meet the Office for Students (OfS) conditions.
    - The education provider supports their programmes in developing clear and meaningful module learning outcomes that reflect increasing theoretical complexity and the evolving expectations of practice-based learning.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Effective programme delivery** –
    - The Quality Manual outlines the process for programme proposals and approvals. The process ensures programmes are effectively supported and managed by appropriately qualified and experienced individuals.
    - Curriculum vitae are submitted as part of the programme approval process to provide assurance to the approval panel. All staff are registered on Staff Space, including up-to-date details of professional registrations. Human Resources and Organisation Development produce a monthly report for the School, with School Directors responsible for ensuring the currency of registration status for Course Directors and team members.
    - Course Directors follow the same staff development policy as all School and University staff, with access to additional development opportunities. These include orientation workshops and School Staff Quality Information Drop-ins, which support role development, share University quality and learning updates, disseminate good practice, and provide guidance on quality processes.
    - At School or programme level, the Subject Head for AHP convenes a monthly workshop with Course Directors to share policy and system updates and undertake action learning for improvement. The School also implements an annual quality assurance framework to provide additional assurance for the delivery of HCPC-regulated provision.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
    - There are staff management and development processes in place, which are outlined in the University Staff Development Policy. All teaching staff are required to have a teaching qualification or to complete the PGCert in Academic Practice. In addition to these, all line

managers are required to complete mandatory courses, such as Positive Performance Conversations.
    - Policies and procedures for professional development and annual appraisal are outlined in the University Staff Development Policy. This is further supported by the University Statutory and Requirement Training matrix, which outlines the mandatory training staff are required to undertake.
    - The School monitors staff's academic activities, external examiner roles, doctoral progressions and leadership development. Staff on the proposed programme will integrate within this framework from appointment.
    - The education provider noted their commitment to supporting all new members of staff with a full induction. This includes Staff Orientation and Welcome event, an online induction module and online e-learning courses.
    - Course Directors are required to be registered on the appropriate part of the professional register. Accordingly, it is standard practice to include the relevant registrable qualification within the essential criteria for academic appointments.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
    - The education provider has collaborative partnerships in place, which are managed by the Academic Strategy Committee. These partnerships are governed by the procedures outlined in the University Quality Manual: Collaborative Partnerships. The purpose of the procedures is to assess any risks attached to a partnership and provide a process for managing and terminating any partnerships.
    - The education provider stated that in order to ensure effective collaborations with partnership organisations, there are various contracts and agreements in place, such as Service Level Agreements, NHS England National NHS Contract and Placement Agreements.
    - All programmes are expected to clearly articulate how partnership working will be promoted. School-level partnership working is supported through structures such as the School Work-based, Placement and Practice Learning Sub-Committee, the University PSRB and Work-Based Learning Sub-Committee, and School-level Course Boards, which meet three times per year ahead of each Board of Studies to provide formal partnership forums.
    - Discussions with learners are held during practice-based learning as part of the Education Audit process. Where possible, staff from partner institutions contribute to audits using a shared, dynamic practice-based learning database system that allows audits and action plans to be viewed, updated, and revised collaboratively.

- Complaints and concerns raised through Alert Reports are regularly monitored, reflected upon, and reviewed with partner organisations, with themes and reporting quality overseen by the School Work-based, Placement and Practice Learning Sub-Committee.
- Strategic issues are escalated through Strategic Contract Quality Review meetings and shared with professional regulators and NHSE South East via regular and exceptional reporting, alongside an annual Placement and Practice Learning report to School and University committees. This structured oversight supports strong, collaborative partnerships with health providers and a shared commitment to learner experiences and outcomes.
- These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality** –
  - The policies and procedures for quality, monitoring and enhancement are outlined in the Quality Manual, which includes Boards of Study and Continuous Improvement. In addition to this, it also provides information about programme planning, approval and modifications. These policies ensure the continuous improvement of programmes.
  - The education provider operates a set of Academic Regulations approved by the Academic Board, covering taught and research awards as well as the conferment of awards. These regulations are supported by Assessment Procedures that set out the processes required to ensure compliance.
  - The education provider has a comprehensive process relating to the appointment and role of External Examiners. All External Examiners are nominated using approved templates and submitted with the nominee's curriculum vitae to the Associate Dean for Education. The Associate Dean reviews the nomination against approved appointment criteria before forwarding it to the Quality and Standards Office, which oversees the education provider's formal approval process. The Progression and Award Board (PAB) External Examiner ensures fairness and transparency in progression and award decisions and confirms that University regulations are applied in line with the relevant regulatory and procedural documents.
  - External Examiners are involved with all programmes at all levels and provide input into all aspects of the assessments including the practice elements. They are nominated as either Module Achievement and/or Progression and Award Board examiners. Their input ensures fair and transparent decisions are made in relation to awards and progression.

    - The education provider requires all programmes to complete Course Performance Plans (CPPs). These plans enable programme teams to gather evidence and make improvements but most importantly they enable them to monitor the overall performance of the programmes. If these plans do not meet the required benchmarks, they are reviewed by the University Portfolio Performance Committee (UPPC), which is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for further scrutiny.
    - Quality assurance is implemented at School level through a consistent approach to oversight and monitoring of a diverse programme portfolio. Course Boards and Boards of Study are the main mechanisms for regularly reviewing and overseeing programme development. An adapted Module Leader reporting template, with a strong focus on data, informs Course Leader reporting at Boards of Study.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
    - The Quality Manual outlines the quality assurance processes for practice-based learning. These processes are set at institution level and overseen by the School Work-based, Placement and Practice Learning Sub-Committee.
    - All practice areas are assessed using the NHS England Multi-Professional Assurance of the Practice Learning Environment Toolkit. The toolkit includes approval and ongoing monitoring tools, alongside escalation and triangulation guidance for managing concerns about the clinical learning environment, with all sections completed collaboratively with education and practice partners. Approval operates on a three-yearly cycle using a risk-based approach.
    - The education provider noted how they prioritise learners' wellbeing and their ability to raise concerns safely. We understood the education provider has implemented a comprehensive strategy to ensure learners feel confident and supported when speaking up about issues during practice-based learning. This includes active engagement with Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and practice staff to promote open, collaborative communication.
    - Learners also have access to formal reporting mechanisms such as ALERT forms, alongside processes for raising lower-level concerns. Together, these measures aim to empower learners to speak up without fear, fostering transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.
    - Learners are expected to contribute to the development of the learning environment. They are asked to evaluate their practice-based learning experience online after each practice-based learning. The audit draws from information provided by the learners.
    - A central repository of electronic Education Audits for shared practice areas is maintained by the Work-Based Learning Unit and is accessible

to Course Placement Leads, with audit outcomes and action plans recorded on the practice-based learning database. Audit action plans and practice-based learning evaluations are regularly monitored, with new actions added as required.
    - Strategic Contract Quality Review meetings provide oversight of service reconfigurations and their potential impact on practice-based learning, and decisions to re-audit are jointly agreed with practice partners when necessary. Action plans are jointly agreed between the Head of Practice Learning and senior practice staff, and where multiple higher education institutions are involved, plans are agreed collaboratively.
    - Placement Leads and the Practice Learning Team meet regularly with Practice Education and Workforce Leads to identify risks from proposed service or workforce changes, which are logged on the School Practice Learning Risk Register. Oversight is provided by the School Work-based, Placement and Practice Learning Sub-Committee, which meets bi-monthly and has strategic responsibility for quality enhancement, capacity management, policy response, and the development of placement learning initiatives.
    - Learners are informed of their practice-based learning allocation through the electronic Placement Database six weeks before the practice-based learning begins. This system provides up-to-date details of practice-based learning areas and key contacts, reflecting any service or staffing changes.
    - The School provides direct training from Placement Leads to support Practice Educators in their roles. Practice partners also contribute to discussions about learner learning and experiences through Course Committee Meetings and Boards of Studies.
    - Practice-based learning preparation sessions are delivered within the School, typically by Placement Leads. Practice-based learning evaluation is carried out through standardised practice debrief workshops.
    - All practice partners operate under formal learning agreements. Quality assurance mechanisms include:
        - Placement audit documentation
        - Environment risk assessment
        - Capacity monitoring
        - Practice educator eligibility checks
        - Safeguarding verification
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Learner involvement** –
    - The education provider expects learners to be involved, and have input into the learning experience, which is outlined in the Quality Manual and the Student Partnership Agreement. The education provider works closely with the Student Union and have produced a Course

Representative guide for learners, to encourage them to get involved with committees and meetings. All of these are institution-level policies. Other institution level policies or structures include Peer observation and review guide for staff, and Student placement evaluation template.

- In addition, there are various School level policies to support this area, such as the Student Engagement in Learning Policy, School student forum and Module evaluation surveys amongst others. Student Voice Forum meetings provide a forum for active partnership between programme staff and course representatives. The education provider also has a Student Survey Unit which is responsible for eliciting learners' view about their university experience and collecting information about their destinations after they leave.
- The Unit plays a key role in the coordination of several surveys, which includes the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), UK Engagement Survey (UKES) and National Student Survey (NSS).
- These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.

- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - The education provider has an Expert by Experience (EbE/Service user) Handbook and supporting documents which outline the role of EbEs. The roles include:
    - Speaking to learners directly about their experiences
    - Giving feedback on teaching sessions
    - Reviewing learning materials
    - Contributing to course development
    - Participating in simulation design or debrief (not acting)
    - Sitting on interview or curriculum panels
    - Helping shape learner assessment or evaluation
  - Within the School, EbEs are involved in:
    - Curriculum review
    - Simulation scenario development
    - Assessment panels
    - Course evaluation events.
  - Programmes are required to provide evidence of EbE involvement in their development, delivery and ongoing review.
  - The education provider noted that the School has reviewed and strengthened its processes for onboarding, supporting, and evaluating EbEs, ensuring their meaningful involvement across all programmes and at all levels. An Expert by Experience Lead coordinates this work, supported by a School EbE Strategy and good practice guidance that helps programme teams embed EbE and carer involvement in teaching, assessment, recruitment, and curriculum design. The School also has a clear payment policy and established examples of EbE

contribution, including involvement in candidate interviews and ongoing participation in course recruitment processes.
    - Experts by Experience also play an important role in learner development through their involvement in simulation-based learning. They contribute to the design of simulation scenarios, which are being further developed to provide medium- to high-fidelity learning experiences. The education provider noted this structured and well-supported approach ensures EbE involvement enhances curriculum quality, student learning, and professional preparation.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work. However, to further consider EbE involvement in simulation, we have decided to refer this to Stage 2.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: As the education provider has noted that they are further developing EbE involvement in simulation to enable medium to high fidelity simulation, we have decided to refer this to stage 2 so it can be further considered (SET 3.7).

<u>Learners</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support** –
    - Learners are offered a range of services to support their wellbeing and learning needs. Some of this support is accessible via the online student portal, such as timetables, teaching materials and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The Students Portal Terms and Conditions of Registration 2025-26 includes links to webpages which contain useful policies and information. Other communication channels used to provide learners with information relating to their programmes include email, student handbooks and 'My Essential Guide' booklet. Learners are provided with clear, accurate, and timely programme information through multiple channels, including Blackboard, email, central student communication systems, and key documents such as the student handbook.
    - The education provider has a Student Complaints Procedure and Student Guide to Bullying and Harassment at University level which learners can follow to raise concerns. They also have a Safeguarding and Raising and Escalating Concerns in Practice guidance which incorporates an Alert report. Learners are expected to follow this guidance in practice-based learning.
    - All learners are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor to provide them with pastoral and academic support. This includes referral to specific support services, such as the Student Support, Health and Wellbeing Department and Disability Services, and student finance. Other support includes the Mental Health and Wellbeing framework, which ensures

learners have access to mental health resources such as drop-in sessions and an online service that is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The Academics Skills Support provides learners with access to:
        - Academic writing workshops
        - Statistics and research support
        - Referencing and dissertation clinics
        - Online academic resources
        - Targeted support for returners to study
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
    - There was no information available about the institutional policies and process of obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners (SET 4.10). This is about respecting individuals' rights and reducing the risk of harm and as such, learners need to understand what will be expected of them. We could therefore not determine how the proposed programme will align. This how been referred to stage 2.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
    - The School's Student Fitness to Practise (SFTP) Policy and Procedures apply to all learners on PSRB-linked programmes, including those already registered with a PSRB. The policy provides a transparent and consistent approach to managing concerns about health or conduct from application through to course completion.
        - Suitability monitoring includes:
        - Health declarations
        - Character checks
        - Practice-based learning performance
        - Professional conduct concerns
        - Academic integrity monitoring
    - Learners must complete an annual declaration of Good Health and Good Character at the start of each year. They are also required to confirm they have met these conditions on the practice-based learning database before being declared ready for practice.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
    - There is a School level AHP Curriculum Framework that ensures all programmes within the School provide opportunities for learners to learn with and from other health, social care, and relevant professional groups.
    - Interprofessional education (IPE) is embedded across programme design to reflect the evolving health and social care context and support collaborative practice. The School's IPE principles emphasise

collaboration as essential to improving outcomes and driving service improvement.
    - In practice settings, learners undertake outreach or short practice-based learning with multidisciplinary teams, with these experiences recorded in their practice assessment documentation. Interprofessional learning is also supported through simulated learning activities, using multidisciplinary simulation suites to enhance shared learning opportunities.
    - The proposed programme will have the opportunity to learn with and from learners and professional from Nursing, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and other Allied Health professions. Interprofessional elements include:
        - Case-based seminars
        - Shared public health projects
        - Simulation scenarios
        - Collaborative ethical discussions
        - Team-based assessment activities.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
    - The education provider has an Equity & Inclusion Strategy overseen by an Equity & Inclusion Committee, which ensures effective implementation and the involvement of people with relevant protected characteristics. Practice partner organisations also maintain their own diversity and inclusion policies to support inclusive practice.
    - The University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2023–2030) focuses on embedding sustainability, wellbeing, and inclusivity across all subject areas. This is supported by the Access and Participation Plan and the Closing Our Gap campaign, which aims to reduce attainment gaps through inclusive curricula, research, and engagement.
    - All staff are required to complete equality and diversity training, with practice partners providing similar training through their own policies. The education provider is committed to widening participation and supports a diverse learner population.
    - The education provider noted they have well-developed learner support structures in place for all learners, with targeted support for learners with disabilities, including dyslexia, and /or other additional learning needs. Reasonable adjustments and tailored support ensure learners can fully engage with their studies.
    - The education provider uses a Learning Support Plans process to support learners with recognised disabilities and/or long term or serious medical or psychological conditions.
    - Schools promote fair admissions, encourage disclosure in a supportive environment, and work collaboratively with learners and practice

partners to ensure adjustments uphold professional standards while responding to individual needs.
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: There was no information available about the institutional policies and process of obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners (SET 4.10). We could therefore not determine how the new programme will align. This how been referred to stage 2.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity** –
    - The education provider noted they uphold academic standards by promoting best practice, equity, and transparency in assessment. Clear regulations govern the submission, marking, moderation, and feedback of assessed work, including second marking processes to ensure fair, reliable, and valid outcomes. Academic staff receive ongoing development to ensure consistency and understanding of assessment and examination procedures.
    - Academic standards and assessment fairness are further assured through the External Examiner system. All programmes are supported by at least one External Examiner, who plays a key role in maintaining quality, objectivity, and sector-wide comparability. Schools also apply structured processes for the scrutiny of practice assessment documentation to support consistency and academic integrity.
    - The education provider has several processes through which assessment reliability is assured. Some of the processes include:
        - Pre-assessment scrutiny
        - Marking and Moderation
        - External examiner oversight
        - Practice-based competence assessment
    - These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.
- **Progression and achievement** –
    - The education provider maintains academic standards through robust Boards of Examiner arrangements, with the External Examiner system providing continuous external assurance of quality and comparability across the higher education sector. Procedures for these arrangements are set out in the Quality Manual, while Progression and Award Boards, chaired by Deans or Deputy Deans, formally confirm learner progression and awards.

- Two distinct External Examiner roles support this process: Module External Examiners and Progression and Award External Examiners. Course Directors and Professional Leads attend Progression and Award Boards to provide additional professional oversight of learner achievement. All assessment and progression decisions operate within a comprehensive framework of academic regulations approved by the Academic Board and detailed in the Regulation and Credit Framework.
- To ensure fairness and inclusion, the education provider offers reasonable adjustments and tailored support for learners with dyslexia, disabilities, or additional learning needs. Support mechanisms include individual learning support plans, special assessment arrangements, exceptional circumstances procedures, and temporary learning agreements. Schools foster a supportive environment for disclosure and provide personalised guidance, including practice-based learning support plans, while maintaining professional and academic standards.
- Some programmes apply Additional Course Regulations where required by professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). These regulations are approved through programme approval and formal Academic Board scrutiny and have equal status to University regulations. For PSRB programmes, compensation between theory and practice is not permitted unless explicitly allowed by the relevant body, with HCPC programmes formally excluded from the education provider's compensation regulations through this process. This applies to the proposed programme.
- The education provider has Regulations for Taught Awards Sept 2025-26 which helps to ensure each programme and award taught is structured, delivered and assessed fairly, consistently and transparently. This also provides clear information to learners on programmes that do not lead to eligibility for registration with us.
- The education provider Regulations for the Conferment of Awards Sept 2023 and Regulations for Taught Awards Sept 2023 which detail progression rules. Learners must:
    - Pass all academic modules
    - Pass all practice modules
    - Meet attendance requirements
    - Maintain professional suitability
    - Compensation is not permitted where it would compromise professional standards.
- Progression is confirmed through:
    - Progression and Award Boards
    - Scrutiny of practice completion
- These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.

- **Appeals** –

- The education provider's Student Appeals procedure allows learners to raise concerns about the assessment process, excluding matters of professional or academic judgement. Learners who wish to pursue an appeal can access guidance and support through the Students' Union advice centre. The stages in the procedures are:
    - Early resolution stage
    - Formal investigation stage
    - Review stage
- Appeals are handled in line with the University's procedures, with Early Resolution initially managed at School level. If the matter is not resolved, it is escalated and manged through the University Registry.
- These processes and requirements will apply to the proposed programme. This aligns with our understanding of how the institution wide policies, processes and procedures work.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment:

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1. As noted through the previous section, there are areas to take forward into stage 2. These are outlined below.

Outstanding issues for follow up:

- The education provider noted that they are further developing EbE involvement in simulation to enable medium to high fidelity simulation. We decided to refer this to stage 2 so it can be further considered (SET 3.7).

- There was no information about the institutional policies and process of obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners (SET 4.10). Therefore, we could not determine whether the proposed programme will align. This was referred to stage 2.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- Staff resources include:
    - Programme Director
    - Two-three academic dietitians with teaching experience is dietetics and other disciplines
    - Practice-based learning Support
    - Simulation technical support
    - Administrative support
    - Experts by Experience
    - Associate lecturers
- The education provider noted their staff resources of two-three academic dietitians with teaching experience is dietetics and other disciplines. We will

need to understand if the Programme Director and the two-three academic dietitians are already in post or part of future recruitment plan. This will need to be clarified through the programme – level assessment.

- Physical resources include:
    - Specialist dietetics laboratory
    - Clinical skills laboratories
    - Simulation suites
    - Shared anatomy and physiology facilities
    - Digital learning platforms
    - Lecture theatres
    - Seminar rooms
    - IT-enabled teaching spaces for blended learning and interprofessional education
    - Comprehensive library and online resources, including dietetics journals, databases and e-learning platforms.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
MSc Dietetics (Pre-Registration)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian	25 learners, 1 cohort per year	17/09/2026

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the Findings section.

Quality theme 1 – partnership working with practice education providers to ensure regular and effective collaboration

Area for further exploration: The education provider submitted evidence including the Dietetics practice handbook, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust and Canterbury Christ Church University (MTW CCCU) Practice Learning Operational Group meeting notes, and minutes from the MAPH Work-Based, Placement and Practice Learning Sub-Committee. The evidence showed there was collaborative practice at an institutional level with practice education providers. However, there was lack of evidence of collaborating with Dietetics practice education providers. As such, we could not determine that there was regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and Dietetic practice education providers to ensure they provide ongoing quality and effectiveness. Therefore, we requested evidence of how the education provider works in partnership with Dietetics practice education providers. We suggested this could be evidence of meetings with Dietetics practice education providers, asking for feedback or other methods of communication with practice education providers in support of continuous improvement on the programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted additional evidence on how they collaborate with Dietetics practice education providers. Examples included minutes from regular stakeholder events (one was held in July 2025, and two in February 2026 to discuss modular design), and ongoing practice-based learning discussion meetings. Additionally, we understood there are Practice Learning Operational Group (PLOG) meetings which happen all through the academic year. Practice-based learning drop-ins are also scheduled ahead of each practice-based learning and helps to provide additional support to practice educators. Minutes of meetings were provided alongside the PLOG date planner. The visitors were satisfied that there are systems and processes in place as evident through stakeholder meeting minutes, and support from wider education provider practice-based learning support departments evidenced ongoing quality and effectiveness. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 2 – capacity and availability of practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The standards of education and training (SETs) mapping document stated that there are ‘robust and forward looking’ processes to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning but there was insufficient evidence to support these. The evidence was set at an institutional level and there

was no evidence specific to Dietetics. For example, the education provider evidenced collaboration with one Trust who supply practice-based learning in other disciplines, but not within Dietetics. The evidence submitted included an example of agreed practice-based learning numbers for Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells (MTW) and the MTW Practice Learning Operational Group meeting notes. As these were examples, the visitors noted availability and capacity of practice-based learning had been discussed in principle but had not been confirmed. Therefore, to reassure us that there will be availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners, we requested that the education provider submit details of how they will secure sufficient practice-based learning. Without appropriate evidence, we could not determine that all learners would have access to practice-based leaning which meets their learning needs for all learners.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider listed their proposed practice education providers and noted they have received confirmation letters for up to 21 placements with each learners requiring three placements and clinical placements 1 and 3. However, the evidence, which included Placement commitments and Letters of intention from various practice education providers, indicated that they only have practice-based learning capacity for six learners. The visitors noted this when they added up the total number of placements for the number of learners. The visitors noted that there were a number of novel practice-based learning sites secured, for example, simulation practice-based learning delivered by Health Academy but there was insufficient capacity for clinical practice-based learning. The education provider stated that Health Academy currently provides practice-based learning for their Physiotherapy, Occupational therapy and Nursing learners and can provide 15 virtual practice-based learning opportunities on the Dietetics programme. However, there was no indication what type of practice-based learning or learning outcomes this would meet and, the visitors considered using Health Academy will supply over the permitted number of hours for simulation in line with BDA requirements. Therefore, the visitors requested further information through quality activity 2 to demonstrate how the education provider would ensure all learners have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

Second quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration 2: In response, the education provider informed us they would now recruit ten learners in the 2026-27 academic year and submitted additional evidence confirming sufficient practice-based learning opportunities for the ten learners in the first cohort. They also decided to drop the use of Health Academy for practice-based learning and that if they brought it in it would apply to all learners (rather than be used as a replacement for clinical hours for some learners).

The education provider also submitted their plans to increase practice-based learning for the second cohort 2027-28 academic year, and this included ongoing communications from practice providers outside of Kent and Medway. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that there is evidence that there would be sufficient practice-based learning for learners in the first cohort, they could not be reassured that the education provider's plans to ensure practice-based learning for up to 20 learners in the second cohort would be actioned.

Therefore, to manage the risk, the visitors recommend that a focused review is undertaken within six months to assess whether the plans in place have effectively ensured the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for the additional learners. This way, we can be reassured that all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

Quality theme 3 – adequate number of appropriately qualified staff for all learners

Area for further exploration: We noted two full time equivalent (FTE) dietitians were recruited to teach on the programme. A number of other staff curriculum vitae (CVs) were supplied (physiotherapists and occupational therapists), but the visitors were unable to see how they would contribute to the programme. There was a phased recruitment plan mentioned but little detail on this was provided. For example, it did not provide a timeline for recruitment or the number of staff that would be recruited. The only information provided was the specialist delivery areas. In the MSc Course Document Summary, it stated that further recruitment would take place at the 'end of spring 2026'. The visitors noted this time point had passed but no further details were provided on progress for this recruitment. The approval request form suggested the programme team would comprise of a Course Director + 2-3 FTE (leading to 1:20 Staff: Student Ratio (SSR)). As such, it was unclear what the staffing plan was for the programme. Therefore, we requested a clear staffing plan for the full cohort (across the two years of the programme), together with information about how staff will contribute to the programme, for example any contributions by physiotherapists and occupational therapists to deliver modules on the programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that all dietetic specific modules would be taught by registered dietitians and that staffing would meet the British Dietetic Association (BDA) requirements relating to the staff / student ratio of 1:15. The recruitment plans showed their commitment to recruit another one FTE for the year 2027-28 and three academic sessional lecturers to teach on the programme. However, it was not stated when this would happen. In addition, they noted four interprofessional education modules will be taught in partnership with physiotherapists, occupational Therapists and dietitians. The visitors noted the

evidence demonstrated there would be adequate staff for the first year of the programme as there would only be ten learners to two FTE dietitians.

However, it was not clear from their response document what the proposed learner numbers would be. To illustrate, the education provider proposed 15 learners in Year 1 and 35 learners in Year 2. However, there was lack of clarity as the visitors were unable to determine if this an initial 15 learners plus a new intake of 20 learners, or an initial 15 learners plus a new intake of 35 learners. We needed to understand this to determine if the proposed recruitment plan for 2027-28, and other staff involvement, would be appropriate for the confirmed number of learners. Therefore, we needed to explore further via quality activity 2.

Second quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration 2: The education provider confirmed they were only recruiting ten learners in Year 1 and 20 in Year 2 making a total of 30 learners. This confirmed that the proposed recruitment plan for 2027-28, and other staff involvement, would be appropriate for the confirmed number of learners. Following the clarification, the visitors were satisfied that the current staff and their recruitment plans would ensure an adequate number of staff for the proposed learner numbers. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

<u>Quality theme 4 – lecturers have relevant specialist skills, knowledge and expertise</u>

Area for further exploration: The education provider stated in their SETs mapping document that they will engage sessional lecturers who are current practitioners or subject experts to contribute to teaching, simulation, and assessment within their area of practice. However, it was unclear how the education provider ensures these lecturers have the relevant knowledge and expertise to deliver relevant parts of the programme effectively, as required by this standard. There was no specific information about what they will teach or any other areas of their involvement.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that all sessional lecturers are engaged to provide specialist knowledge and expertise in specific curriculum areas. The sessional staff will also support the development and co-delivery of simulation-based learning activities, enabling learners to apply subject-specific knowledge within a structured simulated practice environment. Additional CVs were provided and the education provider noted that additional academic sessional staff are progressing through the onboarding process. The structured onboarding process ensures alignment with programme requirements and

institutional procedures. The visitors were satisfied with the process for employing sessional staff; however, the process did not clarify whether CVs are checked in advance of the onboarding processes. Additionally, we noted the Module Teaching Plan document outlined who will be delivering which session, with staff members listed for the majority of modules. However, there was no clarification around who will be delivering the microbiology or pathophysiology aspects of curriculum which is in the Foundation of Dietetics module.

In addition, from the Module Teaching Plan, the visitors noted three dietetic staff who are due to deliver the dietetic teaching aspects and recognised their experience. However, we could not see who had the relevant knowledge and expertise for the nutritional science components that are required to be taught, such as nutrigenetics which is linked to the Contemporary and Global Dietetics module in Year 2. Therefore, we requested additional information on these areas through quality activity 2.

Second quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration 2: The education provider explained that the CV of any proposed sessional staff member is reviewed by the programme team and onboarding team to verify qualifications, professional experience, and subject expertise. They noted the process ensures that all sessional staff are appropriately qualified, meet role requirements, and are fully prepared before commencing teaching.

The education provider noted additional support from a Senior Lecturer in Food Science who has extensive academic and research expertise in biochemistry, nutrition, and food sciences and would be able to teach these areas. We understood their qualifications, which include a PhD, MPhil, Postgraduate Diploma, and BSc in Biochemistry, and teaching experience which spans across food science, nutritional biochemistry, metabolism, molecular biology, analytical chemistry, and food safety would ensure the nutritional science components are well covered. Additionally, their specialist research expertise in nutritional biochemistry, genetics, microbiology, food contaminants, and nutrigenetics would further strengthen the scientific foundations of the curriculum. This lecturer will work alongside the dietetic academic team and clinical specialists to ensure these scientific principles are appropriately applied across the programme through teaching and assessment.

The visitors were fully satisfied with the process of recruiting and onboarding sessional staff and were reassured that the programme team had secured input from a food scientist who will complement the expertise of the dietetic staff. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

<u>Quality theme 5 – effective and appropriate specialist physical resources</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the specialist facilities that have been developed as mentioned in the SETs mapping document. These include the purpose-built simulation suites, the Anatomy Learning Centre, and the diet laboratory Computer Aided Design. This was because at the time of the review, the diet laboratory was not yet built, and the visitors had no information on what it would be like. The visitors needed to be sure that it would have the appropriate capacity and be a safe space for food preparation and testing. In addition, the visitors requested to know what equipment or facilities were available for other aspects of dietetic practice for example, anthropometry equipment, and nutritional analysis software. The visitors needed to know this so they are assured that learners have access to resources to allow them to undertake nutritional analysis and dietary assessments using appropriate software from the correct databases. Additionally, this was required to ascertain that learners would be able to undertake assessment of body composition and that they have equipment to undertake this such as callipers measuring tapes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted additional evidence which included Computer Aided Design (CAD) drawing and build schedule for the diet laboratory as well as the 3D model of the learning pods, one of which has been adapted for wheelchair users. They noted they were in the process of obtaining Nutritics Nutritional Software and that their simulation suite has a wide range of anthropometric equipment available for learners to use in simulated practice. The education provider submitted a spreadsheet of available equipment alongside the equipment and teaching materials that are being ordered via their procurement process. The visitors were satisfied that the additional evidence provided adequately demonstrated that there would be appropriate resources to support the required learning and teaching activities on the programme. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

<u>Quality theme 6 – practice-based learning is integral to the programme</u>

Area for further exploration: The SETs mapping document stated practice-based learning is a central and integrated component of the programme. Practice-based learning was described in the handbook but the practice module descriptors were not submitted. It was therefore difficult to understand how it was integrated into the programme and the learning outcomes. Therefore, we requested evidence within the modules demonstrating:

- how practice-based learning outcomes and progression are in line with learning outcomes for the programme as a whole;
- ongoing partnership arrangements with practice education providers; and
- the education provider's reasons for the design of practice-based learning on the programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted updated Dietetic Placement 1, 2 and 3 Handbooks and Dietetics Skills and Reasoning document alongside a response document. In the response document, they explained that practice-based learning is fully integrated within the programme and mapped to relevant academic modules, learning outcomes, and professional standards of proficiency. Learners develop knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours progressively, with practice learning outcomes aligned to academic study to ensure a coherent learning journey between university and practice-based learning settings.

The visitors understood the programme is designed to demonstrate complexity across both academic and practice-based learning. For example, progression is evident between the Year 1 Dietetic Skills and Reasoning module and the Year 2 Advanced Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition module, where learners build on foundational knowledge and clinical reasoning skills. The education provider noted this developmental approach is mirrored within practice-based learning, with learning outcomes progressing from Dietetic Placement 1 through to Dietetic Placements 2 and 3.

The sequencing of practice-based learning supports learner development and readiness for practice. Dietetic Placement 1 is undertaken at the end of Year 1 to ensure learners have acquired sufficient foundational dietetic knowledge before entering clinical settings. The Leadership practice-based learning is positioned at the end of Semester 1 in Year 2 to reflect increasing learner confidence and to support subsequent academic learning, while Dietetic Placement 3 takes place following completion of taught components, enabling learners to consolidate their knowledge and demonstrate competence as pre-registration dietitians. The education provider's established relationships with practice education providers support practice-based learning provision.

The visitors noted the further information provided on practice-based learning, the structure and integration within the programme, although the visitors were unable to identify how each academic module supports the preparation for practice-based learning. The visitors were therefore unsure how practice-based learning is used effectively and sought further information through quality activity 2.

Second quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration 2: In their response, the education provider explained that prior to the commencement of Practice-Based Leaning 1, learners must complete modules that establish the professional, scientific, evidence-based and

practical foundations required for clinical practice. The Academic and Professional Orientation module helps learners to develop understanding of professional standards, ethical practice, reflection, communication and fitness to practise. Foundations of Dietetics and Integrated Pathophysiology and Pharmacology for Dietitians modules provide the underpinning nutritional, physiological and clinical knowledge. The Evidence-Based and Sustainable Practice module ensures learners develop critical appraisal and evidence-informed decision-making. And the Dietetic Skills, Assessment and Reasoning module prepares learners to undertake assessment, formulate nutritional diagnoses, plan interventions, communicate effectively and maintain professional records.
It was clear that Practice-Based Learning 1 enables learners to apply and consolidate these capabilities within a supervised clinical environment.

From this information, the visitors understood there is adequate support through the initial academic modules to prepare learners for practice-based learning. It was also clear that practice-based learning was structured in a way that taught and practice-based learning are integrated across the three progressive stages, thereby making it an integral part of the programme. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the information supplied clearly addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 7 – appropriate entry requirements to the programme

Area for further exploration: Entry requirements were provided which included a minimum degree of 2:1 in nutrition, nutritional sciences, biological and biomedical sciences or health professional education. The visitors noted the programme was a two-year MSc, in which time learners would need to achieve all the necessary learning outcomes and standards of proficiency (SOPs). The visitors were unclear why these degree areas had been identified as potential entry requirements. For example, the visitors considered that the outcomes of a health professional education programme are very different to a biomedical science degree and that two years may not be sufficient time to develop the necessary skills depending on the undergraduate degree achieved. Therefore, the visitors were unclear about how the education provider had mapped the learning outcomes of the undergraduate programmes, to determine they are appropriate as entry criteria. Therefore, further information was requested to understand the rationale behind the entry requirements.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We initially met with the education provider to provide clarification around what is required. Then the education provider was asked to submit a narrative and additional evidence to demonstrate how the standard was met. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: We understood from the education provider's response that applicants are required to hold a minimum 2:1 degree (or equivalent) in a subject relevant to dietetic practice, such as nutrition, nutritional sciences, biological or biomedical sciences, or health professional education. Applications are assessed

individually, with academic transcripts reviewed to ensure applicants have the underpinning knowledge required for the programme. Emphasis is placed on applicants with undergraduate degrees containing human physiology and biochemistry, reflecting requirements commonly used across UK Level 7 pre-registration dietetics programmes. Applicants are also required to demonstrate substantial prior study in areas including cellular structure and function, biological molecules, biochemical processes, and human physiology at organ and body-system level, providing the scientific foundation for advanced study in nutrition and dietetic practice. The education provider noted this information will be in their admissions documents and on their website. The visitors were satisfied that the entry criteria appropriately mapped to the level and content of the programme. This would ensure learners are able to meet the SOPs once they have completed the programme, irrespective of which degree they achieved to enter the programme. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activities had adequately addressed their concerns in this area.

Quality theme 8 – ensuring all learning outcomes can be met by the end of the programme

Area for further exploration: In the SETs mapping document, the visitors were referred to the SOPs mapping and Assessment landscape documents. The visitors noted the SOPs mapping document was written in a way that showed where every subject will be covered in the programme. From this, and the module descriptors, they noted that the programme covered a significant amount of content. As the proposed programme is a two-year programme, the visitors were unclear how the level of content could be covered in the timeframe. Therefore, the visitors had concerns about how learners would be able to demonstrate the SOPs upon completion of the programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We initially met with the education provider to provide clarification around what is required. Then the education provider was asked to submit a narrative and additional evidence to demonstrate how the standard was met. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider submitted a number of learner facing documents which included updated module descriptors and handbooks. In addition, the education provider submitted an updated SOPs mapping document. From their review, the visitors identified additional and clear detail about the learning outcomes. The updated SOPs mapping and handbooks evidenced how the learning outcomes would be achieved by the end of the programme. The visitors were therefore satisfied that learners would be able to complete the learning outcomes and demonstrate the SOPs upon completion.

Quality theme 9 – demonstration of the expectations associated with being a regulated professional

Area for further exploration: Understanding of, and the ability to demonstrate the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics was described in the SETs mapping document. However, the visitors could not identify where this was outlined in the syllabus or learning outcomes / assessment strategy from other documentation, such as the module descriptors. Therefore, the visitors could not determine how SET 4.2 (The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics) could be met. The visitors considered that the standards should be developed across the duration of the programme, so learners are aware of their obligations when they qualify and apply for registration, as well as throughout their future professional practice. Therefore, the visitors requested that these areas were made clear within the documentation.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We initially met with the education provider to provide clarification around what was required. Then the education provider was asked to submit a narrative and additional evidence to demonstrate how the standard was met. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider provided further detail into where these standards are embedded within the programme. We noted the Academic and Professional Orientation (APO) module introduces learners to the standards, providing the foundation for professional practice throughout the programme. Through the APO framework, learners are required to understand, apply and reflect on the standards, enabling them to demonstrate the professional behaviours expected during their studies, at registration, and in future practice.

Achievement of these learning outcomes is further assessed in the Advanced Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition module. In this module, learners critically evaluate professional, ethical and regulatory issues within a case study, identify relevant HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and use these standards to inform their decision-making and actions. The visitors were satisfied that the standards of conduct, performance and ethics clearly embedded in the Advanced Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition module and within practice-based learning modules. This reassured them that learners that successfully complete the programme will be able to meet the expectations associated with being a regulated professional. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

<u>Quality theme 10 – the structure and range of practice-based learning</u>

Area for further exploration: Whilst the SETs mapping document, as well as the Calendar – MSc Dietetics document, detailed what the timing and duration of the practice-based learning sites were, there were no details about their structure and range within the documentation. The visitors noted there were no practice-based learning module descriptors nor a detailed timetable showing clearly the areas /

topics / learning outcomes that would be covered throughout the programme, in a structured way. Therefore, the visitors could not determine that the design of practice-based learning would support the achievement of the learning outcomes. Without detailed information about the structure and the range of practice-based learning, it was difficult to understand how learners would be able to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and the SOPs. Therefore, the visitors requested clear evidence of the structure and the range of what will be covered in practice-based learning to ensure it is designed in a way that would allow the learners to meet the SOPs for dietitians.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted updated Dietetic Placement Handbooks which demonstrated the structure and the range of practice-based learning and reiterated the number of hours learners will spend in practice-based learning. They also mentioned a reduction in the leadership practice-based learning to four weeks to reduce academic burden with long arm supervision and provide equity across programmes. The visitors noted the handbooks stated that all practice-based learning were at Level 5, but the module descriptors stated Placement 1 was at Level 5, and Placements 2 and 3 at Level 6 and sought clarity. In response, the education provider corrected the errors and submitted updated handbooks clarifying that Dietetic Placement 1 (DP1) is at Level 5, and Dietetic placement 2 and 3 are Level 6.

We understood the simulated and clinical components would be planned as an integrated 10-week practice-based learning experience rather than as two practice-based learning. Learning activities would be mapped across both components to ensure that all DP1 learning outcomes are addressed. Learners would be assessed using the BDA Common Assessment Tool, weekly capability tracking and review processes, with clear supervision, escalation and quality-assurance arrangements across both settings. The visitors were satisfied that the information clearly demonstrated how the structure and the range of practice-based learning across each stage of the programme would support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs. Therefore, the visitors determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

<u>Quality theme 11 – appropriateness of the assessment strategy and design</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the two documents referenced in the SETs mapping document around assessment strategy and design were:

- MSc Dietetics Course Summary
- Assessment Landscape

From these, the visitors noted that a substantial proportion of the assessments were coursework-based and by their nature, potentially more vulnerable to the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) than other assessment methods. From these documents, the visitors could not identify how this would be managed through secure or assured assessment methods. They were therefore unclear how the assessment strategy will manage the risk to assure that learners, who successfully complete the programme, have met the programme learning outcomes and relevant SOPs.

In addition, two examination-based assessments were outlined, both comprising multiple choice questions (MCQs) and short-answer questions. The visitors recognised that the proposed programme is a post graduate qualification and were unclear how this assessment method provided sufficient opportunity to assess and verify associated learning outcomes. For example, critical analysis, evaluation, synthesis and critical awareness of complexity at a Master's level. This is because the learning outcomes at postgraduate level requires higher order thinking and analysis. MCQs by their nature cannot (on their own) demonstrate this level. The visitors considered that the education provider was relying too heavily on this form of assessment.

Therefore, the visitors requested appropriate evidence to address these issues.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this via additional evidence and narrative. We considered these appropriate and proportionate to address the issues identified by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that the programme team had reviewed the assessment strategy (Assessment landscape and the Course loop documents). Updated versions were submitted to more clearly demonstrate how learners are assessed against the programme learning outcomes. The strategy incorporates a diverse range of assessment methods, including written coursework, case-based assessments, examinations, OSCEs, professional conversations, presentations, simulation-based activities and practice-based learning. They noted these varied approaches provide learners with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, clinical reasoning, communication skills, professional judgement and readiness for practice. The use of a broad range of assessment methods also helps mitigate concerns regarding the use of AI to generate coursework. The assessment methods ensure learners are required to justify their reasoning and show how they have used evidence to inform their decisions.

Additionally, the education provider noted they have updated exam formats, replacing multiple-choice and short-answer examinations with multiple-choice and essay questions in the Foundations of Dietetics module. They have also introduced an essay-based format for the Integrated Pathophysiology and Pharmacology module, and these are reflected in the module handbooks. Master’s-level skills are assessed throughout the programme using a range of assessment methods that require learners to analyse information, evaluate evidence, synthesise multiple

sources and make justified professional decisions. Case-based, evidence-based practice, quality improvement and contemporary dietetic practice assessments enable learners to demonstrate critical thinking, clinical reasoning and engagement with research, policy and service development.

The visitors were satisfied noting how the assessment strategy included appropriate assessment methods so learners can demonstrate the learning outcomes and meet the standards of proficiency for dietitians. The visitors therefore determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register**
    - The programme is a Masters degree which exceeds the expected threshold for entry to the Register. The programme is part of the School of Nursing, Midwifery, Allied and Public Health and will be governed through the same layered structure as with other HCPC approved programmes within the School.
    - Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that this standard was met.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
    - The education provider listed the entry requirements as a first degree, or equivalent, with a minimum of 2:1 in a related subject to dietetic

practice such as nutritional sciences, biological and biomedical sciences or health professional education.
    - As detailed through quality theme 7, further information was provided which clearly mapped the entry requirements to the level and content of the programme, and explained why these pre-requite degree subjects were required.
    - The visitors were satisfied that the relevant standard within this SET area had been met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
    - The education provider noted they have established mechanisms within the School of Nursing, Midwifery, Allied and Public Health (NMAPH) that would ensure regular, structured and effective collaboration between them and their practice education providers.
    - As noted in quality theme 1, there is evidence of how the education provider collaborates and partners with practice education providers to ensure ongoing quality and effectiveness.
    - As noted in quality theme 2, there was evidence of sufficient practice-based learning for ten learners starting in the 2026-27 academic year and plans to increase practice-based learning for the 2027-28 academic year.
    - As referred from stage 1, EbEs are an integral part of institutional policy relating to programmes. This includes contributing to programme development and delivery to support the preparation of safe, effective, and person-centred practitioners.
    - In relation to further developing the use of EbEs within simulation, the education provider stated that this is a planned enhancement rather than a requirement for compliance, as current EbE engagement and simulation provision already support learners to practise safely and effectively. The visitors recognised the education provider's response and understood that changes (whether required or enhancements) can take time. As the visitors were unable to assess this change to understand how EbEs are involved in simulation through this exercise, we have decided to refer this to the education provider's next performance review which is scheduled for 2027/28 academic year.
    - The education provider submitted several curriculum vitae (CVs) to demonstrate that they have adequate number of appropriately qualified staff to deliver the programme. They also noted their recruitment plan to support cohort expansion and programme development. As outlined through quality theme 3, there is evidence that there are adequate staff for the proposed ten learners in the first year of the programme and an appropriate recruitment plan to support a further 20 learners in the second intake to the programme.
    - As noted through quality theme 4, there was clear evidence demonstrating how the education provider would ensure all subject areas would be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

    - There is a range of physical and digital resources in place to support learning across all settings for the programme and these are accessible to both learners and educators. We noted module content would be delivered through the education provider's virtual learning environment, Blackboard Learn, which provides a centralised and structured platform for teaching and learning. A range of digital resources is also available, including a Panopto ReCap which is used to record all lecture-based teaching and PebblePad to support CPD, reflective practice, and portfolio development. As seen in quality theme 5, additional information was received around dietetic specialist facilities resources such as anthropometry equipment and nutritional analysis software.
    - Overall, the visitors were satisfied that the information provided across the process sufficiently demonstrated that all standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
    - The education provider noted that the programme is designed to ensure that all learners can meet the SOPs for dietitians. As noted through quality theme 8, an updated SOPs mapping document and handbooks were submitted. These demonstrated that learners would be able to meet the learning outcomes and the SOPs for dietitians upon completing the programme.
    - The education provider stated that the standards of conduct, performance and ethics are explicitly embedded throughout the programme, ensuring learners can develop a clear understanding of professional expectations and apply them consistently across both academic and practice-based settings. Through quality theme 9, it was clear how these are taught within the Advanced Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition module and practice-based learning modules.
    - The philosophy and values of the British Dietetic Association are embedded throughout the programme, helping learners to develop an understanding of professional identity, values and expectations.
    - The programme develops dietetic-specific knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours through a combination of dedicated academic modules and practice-based learning. Learners apply these values and competencies in real-world settings, supported by practice educators and reflective learning processes, enabling them to build confidence and professional competence progressively throughout the programme.
    - Using a constructively aligned curriculum design, learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessments are mapped to the HCPC SOPs and the BDA Curriculum Framework. This ensures that required knowledge, skills, and values are systematically developed and assessed, while alignment with the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan prepares graduates to contribute to prevention-focused, community-based, and evolving models of care.

- The curriculum is designed in response to national and professional priorities, including the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, ensuring alignment with workforce transformation, prevention-focused care, and integrated service delivery. Ongoing collaboration with NHS organisations, community providers, third-sector partners, and practice education providers ensures that content remains relevant to current practice and reflects emerging workforce needs and service developments.
- Programme quality and currency are maintained through regular review of module content and learning outcomes, feedback from learners and practice-based learning evaluations, external examiner oversight, and regular review through Course Committees and Boards of Study. These are supported by a structured quality assurance framework and five-year accreditation cycles; the programme is continuously enhanced to reflect evolving evidence and practice.
- The integration of theory and practice is embedded all through the programme. For example, foundational knowledge is introduced through directed learning, lectures, and seminars, and is then applied through practical sessions, case-based learning, and simulation activities within modules such as Dietetic Skills Assessment and Reasoning. Preparation for practice-based learning further strengthens integration by enabling learners to apply theoretical knowledge within practice-based learning settings. Structured reflection and debrief opportunities are embedded across modules and assessments, supporting critical evaluation of experiences and consolidation of learning across both academic and practice environments. The visitors noted clear evidence of theory being interspersed with practice opportunities.
- The education provider described some of the learning and teaching methods used to support the achievement of learning outcomes across academic and practice-based settings. These included a blended approach which incorporates lectures, seminars, and guided independent learning to develop core knowledge. This is done alongside applied learning through practical sessions, case-based learning, and simulation to support the development of clinical and professional skills.
- The education provider noted how the programme is designed in a way that fosters autonomous and reflective thinking. This is done through:
    - Personal development planning
    - Embedded reflective practice
    - Active learning strategies
    - Simulation and debrief
    - Assessment design supporting autonomy:
    - Practice-based learning
- Further clarification sought through updated documentation showed that evidence-based practice is integrated across the programme. For example, in the module Evidence Based and Sustainable Practice,

leaners are taught to locate, critically appraise and apply research evidence, professional guidance and national policy to dietetic decision-making. In Dietetic Skills, Assessment and Reasoning, they apply this evidence to justify assessment findings, dietetic diagnoses and person-centred intervention plans. Finally, in Quality Improvement, Innovation and Leadership, learners use research evidence, service data and stakeholder perspectives to identify and evaluate improvements in practice.
    - As referred from Stage 1, the education provider described how their established institutional policies and processes ensure that appropriate and informed consent is obtained from service users and learners. These cover their involvement in learning and assessment activities in the academic and practice-based learning environments. This ensures that learning and teaching respects the rights of service users. It also ensures appropriate consent is obtained from learners where they are taking part as a service user in practical or clinical teaching.
    - EbEs are recruited through formal education provider procedures and receive clear information about the purpose, expectations, and use of their contributions before providing consent. Explicit consent is obtained where required, including for recordings, and participants are informed about how data will be used, stored, and protected, as well as any options for declining participation where appropriate.
    - There was sufficient and appropriate evidence received all through the process to satisfy the visitors that all standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
    - The education provider noted that the programme has been designed to ensure that learners develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours required for safe and effective dietetic practice. This demonstrates that practice-based learning is integral to the programme. The visitors noted practice-based learning is explicitly mapped to programme learning outcomes and competency requirements, ensuring that practice-based learning is fully embedded within the curriculum and directly informs assessment and progression. As outlined in quality theme 6, further evidence demonstrated how practice-based learning is used effectively at each of the three stages of the programme, preparing learners for future practice.
    - The education provider noted that the programme provides 1,090 hours of practice-based learning, comprising two 10-week practice-based learning (400 hours each), one 6-week placement (240 hours), and 50 hours of simulated practice. The visitors noted this structure supports the progressive achievement of learning outcomes, enabling learners to develop from applying knowledge in supported environments to demonstrating clinical reasoning, caseload management, and increasing autonomy in practice.
    - The education provider added that the range of practice-based learning reflects the breadth of contemporary dietetic practice, with practice-

based learning across acute, community, public health, third-sector, service development, and other role-emerging settings. The visitors understood this exposure to a diverse range of environments supports learners in transferring knowledge and skills across different populations and service models, preparing them to practise safely, effectively, and adaptably in response to evolving workforce needs. As outlined in quality theme 10, there was sufficient evidence demonstrating how the structure and the range of practice-based learning across each stage of the programme would support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs for dietitians.

- The education provider noted practice-based learning is supported by an adequate number of staff both at the education provider and in the practice-based learning setting who ensure safe, effective and high-quality learning experience for all learners.
- The visitors understood all practice educators are HCPC-registered (where appropriate) and practising within their scope. Practice educators are expected to complete profession-specific preparation aligned to the expectations of the BDA, including training in the Common Assessment Tool (CAT). The effectiveness and suitability of Practice Educators are continuously monitored through:
    - Learners' practice-based learning evaluations
    - Link Tutor feedback and engagement
    - Practice-based leaning audit outcomes
    - Review through Practice Learning governance structures
- In addition, practice educators are prepared and trained ahead of learner allocation and have access to ongoing updates, resources and guidance. All practice educators are required to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional experience necessary to support safe and effective practice-based learning, including the ability to supervise, support, and assess learners in line with course and professional requirements. We understood there is a dedicated Practice Learning Quality Team that oversees the quality assurance of practice-based learning environments and educator capacity. Practice-based learning areas are subject to rolling audit and review, informed by the NHS England Multi-professional Quality Assurance Toolkit.
- Further clarification was sought to understand how the education provider would ensure an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff for the Leadership practice-based learning module. The visitors understood the supervision model during the Leadership practice-based learning is long arm supervision. This was because, the setting may not have established dietetic roles and therefore it may not be possible for a learner to have the support from a registered dietitian within practice-based learning setting. However, supervision will be provided by the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), who is a staff at the education provider and is also a Registered Dietitian.

- In addition, further clarification was sought to understand how practice educator knowledge of the programme would be assured. In relation to this, we understood practice educators are required to complete training provided by either the education provider or their partner organisations, in addition to the BDA Common Assessment Tool training. To minimise duplication and reduce the training burden, the education provider noted they have proposed a shared training register with other education providers delivering Dietetics programme and the co-development of training resources to support greater consistency across organisations.
- Practice educators who are not registered dietitians, but who provide day-to-day supervision of learners during practice-based learning, will be required to demonstrate that they have completed appropriate practice educator skills training.
- Overall, the visitors were satisfied that the information provided across the process fully demonstrated that all standards within this SET area has been met.

- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - The education provider noted their assessment strategy would ensure all learners who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for dietitians. They described how the entry and selection process forms the first stage of this assurance. The assessment strategy aligns with the programme and module learning outcomes and are explicitly mapped to the SOPs. As noted through quality theme 11, further evidence was submitted that demonstrated that the assessment strategy and design would ensure learners can meet all of the SOPs by the time they complete the programme. Through clarification, it was clear that all practice-based learning is assessed on a pass / fail basis.
  - The development and application of evidence-based practice is explicitly assessed across the programme to ensure progressive skill development from novice to autonomous practitioner. Early assessments focus on developing foundational skills in literature searching, understanding research design, and applying evidence to structured case scenarios. As learners progress, they are required to undertake more complex critical appraisal, synthesise evidence from multiple sources, and apply their knowledge to unpredictable and practice-based contexts.
  - The education provider noted how the assessment design ensures learners consistently demonstrate the standards of conduct, performance and ethics in both academic and practice-based settings. They noted expectations relating to professional behaviours and these are explicitly introduced at induction and embedded throughout the programme. As noted through quality theme 9, the visitors noted these are assessed in the Advanced, Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition and practice-based learning modules. It was also clear how the education

provider uses a broad range of assessment methods to mitigate concerns regarding the use of AI to generate coursework.
    - As noted through quality theme 11, the assessment strategy helps to ensure all assessment methods are appropriate to, and effective in, measuring the stated learning outcomes. The education provider noted a range of assessment methods used across the programme to ensure validity, reliability, and inclusivity. These included:
        - Written assignments and critical evaluations
        - Case-based assessments requiring clinical reasoning and decision-making
        - Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)
        - Professional conversations and viva-style assessments
        - Presentations and group-based work
    - Further clarification was sought around specific SOPs to ensure they are related to dietetics. A review and update of the SOPs mapping ensured all the SOPs are appropriately assessed within the programme and would ensure learners who complete the programme are able to practise safely and effectively as dietitians.
    - The visitors were satisfied that evidence provided across the whole process fully demonstrated that all standards within this SET area have been met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval, focused review, or performance review process).

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Further development of the use of Experts by Experience (EbE) in simulation

Summary of issue: Through stage 1, the education provider noted they are further developing EbE involvement in simulation to enable medium to high fidelity simulation. We decided to refer this to stage 2 so it could be further considered. From further review in Stage 2, we understood this is a planned enhancement rather than a requirement for compliance, as current EbE engagement and simulation provision already support learners to practise safely and effectively. The visitors recognised the education provider's response and understood that changes (whether required or enhancements) can take time. However, as the visitors were unable to assess this change to understand how EbEs are involved in simulation through this exercise, we have decided to refer it to their next performance review which is scheduled for 2027/28 academic year.

Referrals to the focused review process

Availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners in the second cohort

Summary of issue: through the quality activity, the education provider confirmed sufficient practice-based learning opportunities for the ten learners in the first cohort in the 2026/27 academic year. The education provider submitted their plans to increase practice-based learning for the second cohort 2027-28 academic year, and this included ongoing communications from practice providers outside of Kent and Medway. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that there is evidence that there would be sufficient practice-based learning for learners in the first cohort, they could not be reassured that the education provider's plans to ensure practice-based learning for up to 20 learners in the second cohort would be actioned.

Therefore, to manage the risk, the visitors recommend that a focused review is undertaken within six months to assess whether the plans in place have effectively ensured the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for the additional learners. This way, we can be reassured that all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

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. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- All standards are met, and therefore the programmes should be approved
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was

also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that the programme is approved

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitors' recommendation that the programme should receive approval.

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on approval. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation, and the nature, quality and facilities of the provision.

Education provider	Canterbury Christ Church University		
Case reference	CAS-02012-W5Y3R3	**Lead visitors**	Sarah Illingworth Susan Lennie
Quality of provision			

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
  - Quality theme 1 – partnership working with the practice education providers to ensure regular and effective collaboration. The education provider submitted evidence which demonstrated there are systems and processes in place as evident through stakeholder meeting minutes, and support from wider education provider practice-based learning support departments. These evidenced ongoing quality and effectiveness.
  - Quality theme 2 – capacity and availability of practice-based learning. The education provider submitted evidence which reassured us that there would be sufficient practice-based learning for all learners in their first year and plans in place to increase practice-based learning for the 2027/28 academic year.
  - Quality theme 3 - adequate number of appropriately qualified staff for all learners. The education provider supplied evidence for a maximum of ten learners to be recruited in 2026/27 and 20 in the 2027/28 academic year making a total of 30 learners. The evidence demonstrated that the current staff and their recruitment plans would ensure adequate number of staff for the proposed learner numbers.
  - Quality theme 4 - lecturers have the relevant specialist skills, knowledge and expertise. The education provider submitted their process of recruiting appropriate educators, with relevant specialist skills, knowledge and expertise needed to deliver all parts of the programme.
  - Quality theme 5 – effective and appropriate specialist physical resources. The education provider submitted evidence for additional resources which demonstrated that there would be appropriate specialist physical resources to support the required learning and teaching activities on the programme
  - Quality theme 6 – practice-based learning is integral to the programme. The education provider submitted additional evidence demonstrating there is adequate support to prepare learners for practice-based learning. It also

demonstrated that practice-based learning was structured in a way that taught and practice-based learning are integrated across the three progressive stages, thereby making it an integral part of the programme.
    - Quality theme 7 – appropriate entry requirements to the programme. The education provider submitted appropriate evidence demonstrating that the entry criteria are appropriately mapped to the level and content of the programme and would ensure learners are able to meet our standards for registration once they have completed the programme.
    - Quality theme 8 – ensuring learning outcomes can be met by the end of the programme. The education provider submitted updated SOPs mapping and handbooks demonstrating that learners would be able to meet the learning outcomes and the SOPs for dietitians upon completing the programme.
    - Quality theme 9 – demonstration of the expectations associated with being a regulated professional. The education provider submitted updated module descriptors which demonstrated that the standards of conduct, performance and ethics are clearly embedded in the Advanced Clinical and Therapeutic Nutrition module and within practice-based learning modules. This reassured us that learners who complete the programme successfully will be able to meet the expectations associated with being a regulated professional.
    - Quality theme 10 - the structure and range of practice-based learning. Updated Dietetic Placement Handbooks were submitted which demonstrated how the structure and the range of practice-based learning across each stage of the programme would support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs.
    - Quality theme 11 – appropriateness of the assessment strategy and design. The education provider made changes to their assessment strategy and design which reassured us that this would ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for dietitians.
- The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
    - Further development of the use of Experts by Experience (EbEs) in simulation. The education provider noted this new development through stage 1. From the evidence provided through stages 1 and 2 of the assessment, there was not sufficient information provided to assess the change to understand how EbEs are involved in simulation. Therefore, we have decided to refer it to the education provider's next performance review which is scheduled for 2027/28 academic year.

The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should approved.

Facilities provided

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- Staff resources include:
    - Programme Director
    - Two-three academic dietitians with teaching experience is dietetics and other disciplines

- Practice-based learning Support
- Simulation technical support
- Administrative support
- Experts by Experience
- Associate lecturers

- The education provider noted their staff resources of two-three academic dietitians with teaching experience is dietetics and other disciplines. We will need to understand if the Programme Director and the two-three academic dietitians are already in post or part of future recruitment plan. This will need to be clarified through the programme – level assessment.
- Physical resources include:
  - Specialist dietetics laboratory
  - Clinical skills laboratories
  - Simulation suites
  - Shared anatomy and physiology facilities
  - Digital learning platforms
  - Lecture theatres
  - Seminar rooms
  - IT-enabled teaching spaces for blended learning and interprofessional education
  - Comprehensive library and online resources, including dietetics journals, databases and e-learning platforms.

Programmes

Programme name	Mode of study	First intake date	Nature of provision
MSc Dietetics (Pre-Registration)	FT (Full time)	17/09/2026	• Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/07/2004
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2000
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2009
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	WBL (Work based learning)	Operating department practitioner			02/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/04/2011
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2018
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsychol)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/01/1998
Master of Science Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2025
Master of Science Physiotherapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2025
MSc Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			18/09/2023
Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/03/2019
Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/03/2019