

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Sheffield Hallam University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Full time BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice, Full time
Approval visit date	22-24 January 2019
Case reference	CAS-13575-F2R5S2

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### Executive Summary

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

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

## Section 1: Our regulatory approach

### Our standards

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

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

### How we make our decisions

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

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

### HCPC panel

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

Julie Weir	Operating department practitioner
John Donaghy	Paramedic
Manoj Mistry	Lay
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive
Jamie Hunt	HCPC observer

### Other groups involved in the approval visit

This was a multi-professional visit with four HCPC panels:

- Panel 1 – BA (Hons) Social Work and BSc (Hons) Nursing (Learning Disability) and Social Work
- Panel 2 – BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy and BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
- Panel 3 – BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology
- Panel 4 – BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice and BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science

For the physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes there were representatives from their respective bodies, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and

College of Occupational Therapists. For the paramedic and operating department practice programmes there were representatives from their respective bodies, College of Paramedics and College of Operating Department Practitioners. The education provider appointed an internal panel who reviewed each of the programmes.

<b>Internal panel members</b>		
Elaine Buckley	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Sheffield Hallam University
Chloe Corbett	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Sheffield Hallam University
David Owen	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Claire Lockwood	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Mary Dawson	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Jill LeBihan	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Lorraine Cookson	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
<b>Professional body panel members</b>		
Paul Townsend	Professional body representative	College of Paramedics
Bob Willis	Professional body representative	College of Paramedics
Nina Paterson	Professional body representative	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Barry Pryer	Professional body representative	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Alison Hampson	Professional body representative	College of Occupational Therapists
Suzie Boyd	Professional body representative	College of Occupational Therapists
Mike Donnellon	Professional body representative	College of Operating Department Practitioners
<b>HCPC Social work panel members</b>		
Richard Barker	Social worker	HCPC visitor
Kate Johnson	Social worker	HCPC visitor
Roseann Connolly	Lay	HCPC visitor
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive	HCPC – panel lead
Jamie Hunt	HCPC executive	HCPC – observer
<b>HCPC Diagnostic Radiography and Therapeutic Radiography panel members</b>		
Shaaron Pratt	Diagnostic radiographer	HCPC visitor
Kathryn Burgess	Therapeutic radiographer	HCPC visitor
Susanne Roff	Lay	HCPC visitor
John Archibald	HCPC executive	HCPC – panel lead
<b>HCPC Occupational therapy and Physiotherapy panel members</b>		
Bernadette Waters	Occupational therapist	HCPC visitor
Kathryn Campbell	Physiotherapist	HCPC visitor
Joanne Watchman	Lay	HCPC visitor

Rabie Sultan	HCPD executive	HCPD – panel lead
<b>HCPD Operating Department Practice and Paramedic panel members</b>		
Julie Weir	Operating department practitioner	HCPD visitor
John Donaghy	Paramedic	HCPD visitor
Manoj Mistry	Lay	HCPD visitor
Niall Gooch	HCPD executive	HCPD – panel lead

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2017
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 70
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02004

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Operating department practitioner
First intake	01 September 2015
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 70
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02007

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment.

The education provider informed the HCPC through the major change process that they were making several changes to the programmes to accommodate further curriculum integration. From the information provided, the education provider's approach to the way the programmes will be managed, resourced, delivered and assessed will be significantly different from the currently approved programmes. We decided that the introduction of an integrated curricula could have significant impact on the way the standards will continue to be met. Therefore, we decided the most appropriate way to assess changes to the programmes was via the approval process.

## Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further

supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

## Section 4: Outcome from first review

### Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

### Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 28 March 2019.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that potential applicants to the programme are given full and clear information about how the foundation year works.

**Reason:** From discussions at the visit the visitors were aware that the education provider was introducing a foundation year across all the allied health programmes. In meetings, the senior team and the programme team gave some verbal assurances that applicants would be given information about this year. However, from these conversations, the visitors were not clear about what information would be provided, in what format, at what stage of the application process. The initial documentary submission had not included evidence relating to the information about the foundation year provided to applicants. In particular, it was not clear how the education provider would clarify for applicants that there were no credits, and no award, available at the completion of the foundation year, and that it was intended solely as a route on to the degree-level programmes. The visitors were therefore unable to determine whether the standard was met, and require the education provider to submit evidence showing how applicants will have access to all appropriate information about the foundation year.

## **2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.**

**Condition:** In relation to the proposed foundation year, the education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the programmes have appropriate academic entry standards.

**Reason:** From discussions at the visit the visitors were aware that the education provider was introducing a foundation year across all the allied health programmes. Information about this had not been included in the initial documentary submission. It was therefore not clear to the visitors how the foundation year would be integrated into the programmes as a whole. During the visit, the programme team and the senior team gave verbal reassurances about how the foundation year would work. This included clarifying that the foundation year was intended to provide an access point to the programmes for learners who did not achieve the necessary grades but who were judged to have the potential to complete the programme. The visitors considered that what they were told about the foundation year seemed appropriate, but as they had not been provided with documentary evidence relating to the foundation year they were unable to determine whether the standard was met. They therefore require further evidence demonstrating that learners coming on to the programmes via the foundation year will meet appropriate academic standards.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further information to demonstrate there is effective management and clear responsibility for the programme.

**Reason:** Prior to the visit, the visitors were made aware the design of the programmes builds on pre-existing inter-professional education and moves towards an integrated care curricula (ICC). Under ICC there will be an integrated approach to the programmes' learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Themes which underpin the concept of the ICC will be threaded into the programmes. From a review of the documentation prior to the visit, the visitors were made aware of the responsibilities of the various roles within the programmes, such as course leader and clinical liaison officer, and the skills and expertise of those staff members involved in the programmes. However, from the information provided beforehand and discussions at the visit, the visitors could not determine whether there was a programme management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities for the ICC constituents of the programmes. As such, the visitors could not determine whether the programme was effectively managed. The visitors require more information about the lines of responsibility for decisions relating to ICC components of the programmes.

**3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the process for identifying and appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person to hold overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriate.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the curriculum vitae of the current programme leaders for the programmes. From the information provided, the visitors were aware of the individuals who will have overall professional responsibility of the programmes. The visitors noted that the staff identified were appropriately qualified and experienced, and on the relevant part of the Register. In the programme team meeting, the visitors were informed that there is a process in place to ensure that they identify and appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme. The visitors were informed that this process includes selecting a programme leader from the current staff provision, and the role is recruited to on a rotating basis. However, the visitors were not given the process, and therefore could not determine that it is appropriate to ensure that the education provider will continue to appoint a suitable person and, if necessary, a suitable replacement. As such, the visitors require the education provider to demonstrate that they have an effective process for ensuring that the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that appropriate consent is obtained from learners, and service users who contribute to the programme.

**Reason:** From their review of programme documentation for both programmes, the visitors were not clear about how the education provider ensured that, where necessary, the informed consent of learners, and service users who contribute to teaching and learning activities, was obtained. They were given verbal reassurances from the programme team that learners and service users were asked for consent when

taking part in activities such as role play. From the meetings with learners and service users the visitors were aware that learners and service users generally felt that their consent was taken seriously on the programme. However, the visitors were not clear about how this consent was recorded. It was also not clear from the discussions whether learners or service users were able to opt out if they wished, or how often the consent was reviewed. This meant that the visitors were not able to determine whether the process was effective. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence demonstrating that their processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners is effective.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that assessment of practice competency at level 6 of the programme is aligned appropriately with assessment of practice competency at levels 4 and 5, to ensure reliability in measuring assessment.

**Reason:** From their review of programme documentation, the visitors noted that in the assessment of practice competency at level 6, learners were marked as either "Progressing" or "Achieved". In the same assessment at levels 4 and 5 the options were pass / fail. It was therefore not clear how this level six assessment related to earlier assessment. They considered that the changed wording introduced an element of ambiguity into what was expected of learners at this stage of the programme. It created a risk that assessment over the course of the programme would not be consistent and that learners would not understand how they were progressing through the programme. They therefore require the education provider to demonstrate how they will ensure consistency of assessment in practice competency.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates the assessment load for the 'Assessing and addressing complexity' module is a reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

**Reason:** At this multi-professional visit, the social work panel from HCPC raised with the programme team for the social work programmes that they found the assessment load for some 40 credit modules, at level four and level five, were comparatively low to other modules on the programmes. One of the modules the visitors were referring to is the 'Assessing and addressing complexity' module at level five, which is a shared module for all programmes within the Integrated Care Curricula. This was not picked up at the visit by the other HCPC panels, and so it was not discussed at the visit for these programmes. However, on reflection, considering the broader impact of the condition required by the social work visitors, we found it appropriate to require a response relating to all programmes within the Integrated Care Curricula.

For the 'Assessing and addressing complexity' module, the social work visitors noted the assessment for this module was a poster presentation and an essay of 1500 words. The social work visitors discussed this with the social work programme team at the visit, who acknowledged they were unaware of the details of assessment load on the module and could not give a rationale without looking further into it. As such, from the information provided, the visitors could not determine what the rationale was for the

assessment load on the module, which would ensure a reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement. By 'reliable' we mean that assessments are consistent and thorough enough to allow learners to demonstrate how far they have progressed during the course of the programme and achieve the learning outcomes. Without understanding the rationale for the assessment on this module, the visitors could not determine how the assessment load would ensure a thorough enough assessment. As this is a shared module, we now require further evidence on this for these programmes. Therefore, the visitors require further information about the rationale for the assessment load for the 'Assessing and addressing complexity' module, which demonstrates that the assessment will provide a reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

### **Recommendations**

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

#### **2.6 There must be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider producing clearer guidance for applicants about how the education provider will assess their prior learning and experience.

**Reason:** The visitors considered that the standard was met at threshold. It was clear from the programme documentation and from discussions at the visit that the education provider had an appropriate and effective process in place for assessing applicant's prior learning and experience (PLE), and that applicants and learners had access to appropriate information about this. However, the visitors did consider that it might not be clear to all potential applicants how the education provider would make decisions about PLE. If learners did not understand the process there may be a risk that it was no longer effective or appropriate. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider review how they provide guidance for applicants around PLE.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing their recruitment process for service users and carers to create a more joined-up approach.

**Reason:** The visitors considered that this standard was met, as there was strong service user and carer involvement across several different parts of the programme, and that this was well-planned and appropriately monitored. However, from their discussions with service users and carers, it appeared that the recruitment process for service users and carers was unsystematic, and reliant on existing service users or programme staff inviting people. The visitors considered that there might be a risk in future that this would impair the education provider's ability to recruit enough appropriate service users on to the programme, and that as a result the standard would no longer be met. This was particularly important in light of the introduction of the Integrated Care Curriculum, which the visitors understood would increase the demands on the existing service users and carers. They therefore recommend that the education provider look again at how best to recruit service users and carers.

**3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Recommendation:** For the paramedic programme, the education provider should consider reviewing module reading lists to ensure that they are as helpful as possible for learners.

**Reason:** The visitors considered that this standard was met, as the resources available on the programme were appropriate and accessible. However, the visitors also noted that on the reading lists for the Level 4 module Personal and Professional Development there were 54 books referenced, with no differentiation between what was core and what was supplementary, as has been done with other reading lists. Particularly in light of the fact that this was a first-year module, started early in the programme, when learners were still orienting themselves to the demands of degree-level education, they considered that this might create a risk that the reading list for the module was not accessible to learners. They therefore recommend that the education provider ensure that all reading lists are accessible.

**3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing how they ensure that all learners understand the details of how to raise concerns.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met at threshold, as the materials available to learners contained information about how to raise concerns, including reassurance about confidentiality and lack of impact on their studies, and the learners to whom the visitors spoke seemed confident that they would know where to find such information. However, the visitors did note that some of the learners seemed uncertain about what was meant by raising concerns, and about the details of how they might raise a concern in their practice-based learning settings, as distinct from at the university. They considered that this might create a risk that the standard was not met, as a process whose workings are not well understood might not be effective. They therefore recommend that the education provider continue to ensure that all learners understand how they will be supported and enabled to raise concerns.

## Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

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

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 22 May 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).