

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	De Montfort University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedicine, Full time
Approval visit date	12 – 13 February 2019
Case reference	CAS-13632-K8J2S3

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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:

Kenneth Street	Paramedic
Louise Whittle	Lay
Gordon Pollard	Paramedic
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive
Lawrence Martin	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Christine Fidler	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	De Montfort University
Sophia Welton	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	De Montfort University
Lisa Wakefield	Internal panel member	De Montfort University
Sally Lloyd	Internal panel member	De Montfort University
Jenny Coombs	Internal panel member	De Montfort University

Gemma Howlett	Internal panel member – External advisor	University of Worcester
Chris Moat	College of Paramedics panel member	College of Paramedics
Neil Larman	College of Paramedics panel member	College of Paramedics

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedicine
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 40
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02018

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

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we 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	Reason(s) for non-submission
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	Not Required	This is a new programme, therefore external examiners' reports were not applicable.

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

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	We met with learners on the Certificate in Higher Education Emergency Medical Care and the Post Graduate Certificate in Non-Medical Prescribing programme offered by the education provider.
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 17 May 2019.

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.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes will ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider referred to two modules, and the practice assessment document (PAD). The education provider explained that this standard is covered in two distinct points in the programme; in year one and year three in the modules 'Accountable, legal and ethical care' and 'Paramedic law and legal practice'. The education provider also notes that this is assessed within the PAD. On review of the evidence, the visitors could not find specific reference within these modules or the learning outcomes that related to HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs).

Page 53 of the PAD contains a checklist for assessing learners on 'Conduct, performance and ethics' which are a list of statements from the HCPC's SCPEs. The visitors could not see from this assessment how it was linked to any of the learning outcomes contained within the modules on the programme. At the visit, the programme team confirmed that the checklist was not linked to any learning outcomes on the programme. The programme team talked about how expectations of professional behaviour, including conduct, performance and ethics are taught within the two modules in year one and year three. From the information provided and through discussions at the visit, the visitors could not determine how the learning outcomes, without specific reference to the SCPEs, would ensure learners understand and are able to meet them. We do not set how the SCPEs should be covered during the programme, however, the standards should play a prominent and structured role in the design of the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to determine how the learning outcomes will ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure learners are aware of attendance requirements in relation to progression on the programme, and how they ensure learners are aware of the implications of non-attendance.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider explained that they recognise learning can take place in a variety of settings, and as such do not have a mandated level of attendance for the taught sessions. The education provider also refers to the programme handbook for information about mandatory progression points on the programme. The visitors noted that one of the 'mandatory module passes' is Module one – Foundations of Ambulance Practice (Skills Passport) which learners are required to pass before they can progress onto practice-based learning. At the visit, the programme team confirmed that learners would be required to attend sessions for this module in order to attain a pass, which is required for learners to progress onto practice-based learning. From the information provided to learners, the visitors could not see how learners would be made aware the requirements of attending sessions for this module, in order to progress on the programme.

The visitors also read the 'Frequently Asked Questions' section of the programme handbook. In response to the question 'Do I have to have 100% attendance at university?' the education provider states 'Failure to attend scheduled lectures or skills will be reported on your reference when you go to apply for a job' and 'If you fail and you haven't engaged with the scheduled teaching, this will not be looked on favourably at any appeals'. From the information provided, the visitors could not determine that learners would have specific, detailed information about attendance requirements in relation to progression on the programme. Similarly, the visitors could not determine that learners would be aware of the implications of non-attendance in relation to progression on the programme. As such, the visitors require further information about how the education provider communicates to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and how they communicate to learners what the implications are for non-attendance. In this way, the visitors can determine whether the standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence about the process for approving and ensuring the quality of ambulance practice-based learning settings.

Reason: In the SETs mapping document for this standard, the education provider stated “Placements will only be with approved providers and subject to inspection prior to students being permitted to undertake placement at that location”. The education provider referred to the ‘Mentor database’ which provides a list of practice educators and their mentor qualifications taken from the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) database. The document goes on to explain that ambulance based placements are audited by the paramedic team on a rolling-yearly basis. From the evidence provided, the visitors have not seen what system the education provider has for approving and ensuring the quality of the ambulance stations. At the visit, the practice education providers talked about the system that EMAS has for approving and ensuring the quality of all their ambulance stations, and how this is recorded. The practice education providers confirmed that the education provider had already completed some initial visits of practice-based learning settings, and have plans in place to visit the settings for ongoing quality audits. The programme team also clarified that all of the ambulance stations they will be using for this programme have had audits undertaken in the last month. The visitors have heard verbal reassurances that the education provider has undertaken a process of approving and ensuring the quality of ambulance practice-based learning settings. However, the visitors have not seen evidence of this process, or that it has taken place. Therefore, the visitors require further information about the education provider’s system for approving and ensuring the quality of ambulance settings for practice-based learning, which demonstrates it is thorough and effective.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning in the non-ambulance setting.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider stated “As part of the agreement between DMU and EMAS an appropriate number of qualified mentors have been agreed”. The education provider referred to the mentor database, which provides a list of practice educators taken from the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) mentorship database. The visitors agreed there was sufficient information to demonstrate adequate staffing for practice-based learning in the ambulance setting. However, the visitors understand learners will also be placed in non-ambulance settings for practice-based learning. The visitors were not provided with any information about the number of staff involved in the non-ambulance setting, or information about who these staff were, which would enable them to determine whether they are appropriately qualified and experienced.

At the visit, the visitors met with a practice education provider responsible for delivering non-ambulance practice-based learning. The practice education provider currently takes learners from nursing programmes at the education provider as well as paramedic learners on other programmes in the region. They hold a ‘mentor register’ with up to

date information about which staff have completed their mentor training. The programme team also talked about meetings with the practice education providers in the non-ambulance settings to ensure there will be adequate and appropriately qualified staff for the number of learners on the programme. The visitors heard verbal reassurances about the staffing provision for the non-ambulance practice-based learning settings, and that they would be appropriately qualified and experienced. However, the visitors have not seen evidence which demonstrates this. As such, the visitors require further information about the staffing within the non-ambulance practice-based learning settings, to determine whether there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that practice educators in the non-ambulance practice setting, have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider stated “Practice educators are supported through a HEI based mentorship course or in-house EMAS training. A register of paramedic educators is held and maintained by the ambulance service.” The education provider referred to the mentor databased which is held by East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS). The visitors were not provided with evidence about the staff who would be involved in the non-ambulance settings. At the visit, the visitors met with a practice education provider who would deliver some of the non-ambulance practice-based learning. The practice educator provider explained that they currently take learners from nursing programmes at the education provider as well as paramedic learners on other programmes. The practice education provider noted they hold a ‘mentor register’ with up to date information about which staff have completed their practice mentor training. The visitors heard verbal reassurances about the staffing provision for the non-ambulance practice-based learning settings, that they would be appropriately qualified and experienced, and where appropriate on the relevant part of the Register. However, the visitors have not seen evidence which demonstrates this. As such, the visitors require further information about the staffing within the non-ambulance practice-based learning setting, to demonstrate that the practice educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, are on the relevant part of the Register.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence about the non-registered practice educators, which demonstrates they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.

Reason: On review of the evidence for this standard, the visitors noted a list of practice educators for the programme, taken from the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) database. The visitors noted that the list for each ambulance station contained both paramedics and technicians. The technicians listed all hold an EMAS practice

educator qualification. From this, the visitors understood that ambulance technicians, who are not registered with a regulatory body, could be a practice educator for learners on this programme. At the visit, the programme team discussed their plans to involve ambulance technicians as practice educators on year one of the programme. The programme team explained that there would be a 'lead practice mentor' who would be a HCPC registered paramedic and would be responsible for signing off a learner against the competencies. The ambulance technician practice educator would be the 'associate mentor' who, the education provider explained, would be used to support first year learners in their early levels of development, working on skills such as communication, moving and handling, decision making etc. From the discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that most of the learners' direct supervision would be by the ambulance technician. While the paramedic practice educator will sign them off, this may be based on the recommendation of the ambulance technician who has been mentoring the learner.

The programme team explained that the ambulance technicians chosen for the practice educator role would have a minimum of nine months post-qualification experience, and they would have completed practice educator training before taking a learner. The visitors heard verbal reassurances about how the education provider will ensure the non-registered practice educators will have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning, and that they have quality assurance processes in place for these practice educators from a non-regulated profession. However, the visitors have not seen evidence of who the non-registered practice educators will be, that will demonstrate they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning. Therefore, the visitors require further information to determine whether this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure that practice educators from the non-ambulance settings undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider stated that "Practice educators are supported through a HEI based mentorship course. Mentors can access the DMU mentors hub which is a contemporaneous source of mentor information." The education provider referred to the mentor database which is held by East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS). From the information provided, the visitors were not clear whether the practice educators in the non-ambulance setting would receive the same training as the practice educators in the ambulance setting, or how this would be monitored to ensure ongoing training for those practice educators. At the visit, the practice education providers for the non-ambulance setting explained that they currently hold a 'mentor register' with up to date information about which staff have completed their mentor training. The visitors heard verbal reassurances that practice educators in the non-ambulance setting would undertake initial and update training which is appropriate to their role, however the visitors have not seen evidence of how the education provider will ensure this. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about how the education provider will ensure that practice educators in the non-ambulance settings will

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

6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider referred to a number of learning outcomes in the programme which relate to expectations of professional behaviour, including conduct, performance and ethics. The education provider notes that professional aspects of behaviour including standards of conduct, performance and ethics are assessed throughout the programme. On review of the evidence, the visitors could not find specific reference within these modules or the learning outcomes that related to HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs).

Page 53 of the practice assessment documents (PAD) contains a checklist for learners on 'Conduct, performance and ethics' which are a list of statements which relate to HCPC's SCPEs. The visitors could not see from this assessment how it was linked to any of the learning outcomes contained within the modules on the programme. At the visit, the programme team confirmed that the checklist was not linked to any learning outcomes on the programme. The programme team talked about how expectations of professional behaviour, including conduct, performance and ethics are taught within the two modules in year one and year three, and that this is assessed throughout the programme. The visitors note that there was one assessment relating to the SCPEs, however this was not linked to any learning outcomes on the programme. The visitors could also not see how this would be assessed throughout the programme. As such, the visitors could not determine how assessment throughout the programme would ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to determine whether this standard is met.

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.

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 how learners are made aware of the process to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users, to ensure information is clear and accessible.

Reason: Through their review of the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors considered the standard is met. At the visit, the programme team explained the various ways that learners could raise concerns, including the education provider's

whistleblowing policy, the safeguarding policy at the ambulance settings, and how learners could raise concerns through either their practice educators, or their personal tutor from the academic setting. The visitors heard a number of policies (both from the education provider, and practice education provider) that learners could refer to for information about raising concerns. The visitors considered that this would be a lot of information for learners to consider if they were to seek out how to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. The programme team explained that other programmes within in the Faculty use a generic flow chart for escalating concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users and carers, and suggested that this could be included for learners on the paramedic programme. The visitors therefore recommend that this kind of information is put into the paramedic documentation for learners, so that learners will have clear and accessible information to enable them to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how effective the assessment methods used for some modules are at measuring the learning outcomes.

Reason: On review of the documentation, and through discussions at the visit, the visitors considered this standard is met. For some of the modules the visitors noted that the assessment method used was relatively low-level in comparison to the learning outcomes being assessed. For example, in the 'Paediatrics and Child Health' module the assessment is one presentation of ten minutes, where learners are expected to cover three learning outcomes in this one assessment. This was discussed at the visit, and the programme team explained this was approached with colleagues in midwifery provision, and it is scenario based to cover a range of aspects in the ten minute presentation. From the discussions, the visitors were satisfied this meets the standard at threshold. However, the visitors recommend that the education provider considers the effectiveness of the assessment methods on those modules, for example, consider the breadth and depth of assessments used in relation to the content and range of learning outcomes being assessed.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

Second response to conditions required

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

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence about the non-registered practice educators, which demonstrates they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the education provider submitted a document from the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS), which details their process for utilising ambulance technicians as practice educators. The visitors read that the amount of post qualification experience required for ambulance technicians to become practice educators, has increased from nine months to 12 months. However, the visitors could not find information about who will formally sign off the learners in the practice-based learning setting. The visitors note that the document suggests there will be oversight from a registered paramedic practice educator, but there is no detail about how that oversight will work in practice. At the visit, the visitors had heard verbal reassurances that there would be a 'lead practice mentor' who would be a HCPC registered paramedic and would be responsible for signing off a learner against the competencies. The document in response to this condition states "Ensuring that students also have access to a Paramedic Practice Educator at level 4 is monitored and co-ordinated by the EMAS placement lead shared with the University." However, the visitors could not find details about how the education provider ensures or monitors this.

On review of the level four Practice Assessment Document (PAD) included in the initial submission, it was the visitors' understanding that an ambulance technician could potentially sign off almost half of the competencies, as they are within the technician's own scope of practice. The visitors were not clear how the education provider ensures that learners on level four would have access to a registered paramedic practice educator to sign off the competencies that could not be signed off by an ambulance technician practice educator. Therefore, the visitors require further information about how the education provider will ensure that there is suitable oversight of non-registered practice educators, and how they will ensure that all learners will have sufficient access to registered paramedic practice educators. The visitors can then determine whether learners will have access to, and be signed off by practice educators who have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning on all parts of the programme.

Suggested documentation: Further information about how the education provider will ensure that there is suitable oversight of non-registered practice educators, and how they will ensure that all learners have reasonable access to a registered paramedic practice educator so that they can have all the required competencies signed off.

Section 6: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, and the request for further evidence set out in section 5, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 22 August 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](#).