

Approval process quality report

Education provider	University of Ulster
Name of programme(s)	Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing (Part time)
Date Assessment commenced	11/02/2021
Visitor recommendation made	25/08/2021
Case reference	CAS-01027-Y0K9H9

Summary of findings from this assessment

This a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC in relation to the University of Ulster’s Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing programme.

This programme intends to deliver training for orthoptist exemptions through an existing programme run by the education provider. Therefore, we have undertaken a review via the approval process to consider whether the programme meets our standards for orthoptists exemptions. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

The outcomes of this process were as follows:

- Visitor-led Stage 1 assessment was not required based on the new programme(s) being proposed for delivery aligning to existing provision at the provider.
- The visitors recommended the programme(s) be approved as all programme level standards were met through their Stage 2 assessment.

The Education and Training Committee will now meet to consider the visitors recommendations and make a decision regarding programme approval.

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Section 1: Background information

Who we are

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.

Our standards

We approve institutions 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 standards are divided into two levels based on their relevance to the institution and programme(s). The following considerations were made when splitting standards between the institution and programme level:

- Where accountability best sits, with either the accountable person for the institution or programme
- How the standard is worded, with references to the education provider and processes often best sitting at the institution level, and references to the programme or profession often best sitting at the programme level
- We have preferred seeking assurance at the institution level, to fit with our intention to put the institution at the centre of our quality assurance model.

Our approach to quality assuring education

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of institutions 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
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards

Institutions 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

We take a staged approach to quality assurance, as we need to understand practices which will support delivery of all programmes within an institution, prior to assessing the programme level detail. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we assess to be assured 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 process we will initially review the proposal and then design our assessment based on the issues we find. As such the assessment methods will be different based on the issues which arise in each case.

How we make 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 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 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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

Section 2: Our assessment

Stage 1 assessment: The institution

Education provider	University of Ulster
Accountable person	Kerry Clarke

As part of the initiation of the process the education provider indicated that the proposed programme will be running a new route through the existing programme Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing, with an additional annotation being offered of prescription only medicine sale / supply for orthoptists. The education provider is well established with HCPC and currently delivers approved programmes in:

- Biomedical Science
- Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Paramedic Science
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Prescribing
- Radiography
- Speech and Language Therapy

In previous standards assessments of these programmes, visitors have established the institution level standards are met. The provider has also demonstrated this through ongoing monitoring carried out by the HCPC.

The education provider has defined the policies, procedures and processes that apply to the programmes they deliver. These relate to the institution level standards we set which ensure the following areas are managed effectively:

Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• information for applicants• Assessing English language, character, and health• Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)• Equality, diversity and inclusion
Governance and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective programme delivery• Effective staff management• Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level
Quality, monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic components, including how curricula are kept up to date• Practice components, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments• Learner involvement• Service user and carer involvement
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support• Ongoing professional suitability• Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)• Equality, diversity and inclusion

Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivity • Progression and achievement • Appeals
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Assurance that institution level standards are met

As part of this stage we considered how the proposed programmes align with existing provision at the provider, by considering any notable differences with the application of policies, procedures and processes related to the areas above.

We considered how the proposed programmes are assimilated with the management of existing approved programmes at the institution. On this basis, we were satisfied it is appropriate to take assurance the institution level standards will continue to be met with the introduction of this programme.

Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

Education provider	Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing
Accountable person (for the programmes)	Kerry Clarke
Programmes	Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing
Entitlement	POM sale / supply for orthoptists
Mode of study	Part time
Qualification level	CertHE (Certificate of Higher Education)
Start date	01/9/2021

Through assessment of information provided, we identified that the above proposed programme is based on existing provision. This was considered as context when we assessed the new provision, as there were areas of the new programme which we did not need to directly assess, as approaches matched across existing and new provision.

The provider plans to run a route through their existing programme (ULS01361 - Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing) to deliver training for orthoptist exemptions. The existing programme delivers the POM sale / supply annotation for chiropodists / podiatrists, and the new intended annotation would be POM sale / supply for orthoptists.

The way the learning is structured means that the theoretical basis which underpins a learner reaching competence in the specific annotation applies for different professional groups. For the purposes of regulatory approval, we decided to:

- assess that this programme is fit for purpose for the new professional group, focusing on the competencies delivered against the proficiency standards for orthoptist exemptions; and
- update HCPC programme records so the online list of approved programmes is correct.

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

We also considered other sources of information, intelligence, and data points as noted in the table below:

Data Point	Bench- mark	Value	Score	Executive Comments
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	30	37	-0.04	This data point is for the existing Pharmacotherapeutics in Prescribing programme, which the education provider manages and will continue to do so going further.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	7.3	6.8	0.01	We collected this data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The first data point is 0.01, which indicates the education provider has scored well. The second data point -0.01 indicates the education provider is very close to the minimum threshold of good score.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	95	94.4	-0.01	
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	N/A	N/A	The education provider did not take part in this award, and therefore there is no score for this.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	81.98	83.36	0.02	We collect this data from the Office for Students (OfS), who run a survey for learners and graduates of undergraduate Higher Education. This score indicates the education provider is performing well in this area.
HCPC AEPM cycle length	N/A	N/A	N/A	This data point is not currently available, as this will be decided through the education provider's next performance review exercise.
Overall score	N/A	N/A	0.96	This overall score is a very high score, which indicates the education provider is performing very well overall.

Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information against our programme level standards:

Registrant	David Newsham – Orthoptist
visitors	Jo Jackson - Physiotherapist

Assessment of the proposal

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard.
- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information around.
- Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors discussed and finalised the most appropriate quality activity to undertake this investigation.

Quality activity: Written Questions:

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary.

Theme	Reason for written question
Practice-based learning competencies	The visitors were unclear which specific orthoptist-linked competencies learners expected to meet during practice-based learning.
Subject areas taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge	Visitors wanted to explore whether there were any staff from an orthoptist background, and as such needed clarity on how teaching will be managed to ensure profession specific requirements will be covered. Additionally, visitors wanted to understand the role of the external adviser (Head of Orthoptic Services) and whether this individual will in any way contribute to teaching.

From their detailed review of the responses submitted, the visitors were satisfied with the clarification provided to address all of the queries identified above. As such, they were able to recommend approval of the programme.

Summary of visitor findings

A: Admissions

Visitors considered the information submitted within the evidence submitted related to admissions, was very well detailed, with clear information provided about the academic and professional entry and selection criteria onto the programme. The

education provider highlighted their requirements for direct entry onto the programme that the visitors considered appropriate and suitable for applicants to be best placed to undertake the programme.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

B: Programme management and resources

The education provider was able to demonstrate the availability of sufficient physical and technology resources that would effectively support learners in the delivery of the programme.

The education provider was also able to demonstrate the profile of their programme team, along with providing clear information on increasing staff numbers to cope with increased learner intake. The programme team consisted of staff from various profession specific backgrounds.

The education provider also confirmed inclusion of an Orthoptist with the exemption qualification as a mentor, following further enquiry from the visitors around staffing. Visitors considered and deemed this approach to suitable.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

C: Curriculum

The visitors considered the standards are mapped against the module learning outcomes, and relates to legislation and context of the qualification for orthoptists.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

D: Practice placements

The visitors considered the evidence provided clearly explained that a Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP) is required to be identified by learners who apply for this programme. The DMP will assist learners in their training as part of the programme application process in place, for the programme. Visitors considered the evidence around this as appropriate, along with the expectations of a practice educator were clearly demonstrated.

The education provider also confirmed specifics of orthoptists competencies covered during practice-based learning, following further enquiry from the visitors. Visitors considered the responses as suitable which highlighted a range of competencies for orthoptists, during practice-based learning

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

E: Assessment

The visitors considered assessment requirements as appropriate. It was noted it consisted of combining theoretical knowledge, drug calculation and competency assessment portfolio with appropriate weighting and pass mark requirements.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

Section 3: The visitors' recommendations

Based on these findings the visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

Programme approval

The programme is recommended for approval, without conditions.

Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 25 August 2021.