

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Hull
Name of programme(s)	MSc Nutrition and Dietetics, Full time
Approval visit date	11 May 2021
Case reference	CAS-16828-L4D0C0

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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:

Tracy Clephan	Dietitian
Sarah Illingworth	Dietitian
Temilolu Odunaike	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the virtual approval visit

There were other groups involved with the approval process as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Deborah Robinson	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Hull
Claire Hairsine	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Hull
Charlotte Pettitt	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Hull
Menna Wyn-Wright	Professional body executive	British Dietetic Association (BDA)

Pauline Douglas	Professional body representative	BDA
Jane Wilson	Professional body representative	BDA

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Nutrition and Dietetics
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Dietitian
Proposed First intake	01 September 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 17
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02311

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

## Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

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

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

Internal quality monitoring documentation	No	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running
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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provider decided to move this event to a virtual (or remote) approval visit. In the table below, we have noted the meeting held, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Not Required	As this was a virtual visit and, because the visitors did not have areas to address with this group, we decided that it was unnecessary to meet with them.
Facilities and resources	Yes	Facilities and resources were covered in a presentation by the programme team.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice educators	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	

## Section 4: Outcome from first review

### Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the virtual 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 18 June 2021.

### 3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that the process in place to ensure the availability of practice-based learning for all learners on the programme is effective.

**Reason:** From reviewing documentation submitted prior to the visit and discussions at the visit, the visitors identified that practice education providers were committed to

taking learners from this programme. The visitors understood that practice education providers are also committed to supporting Dietetics learners from other education providers in the region. At the visit, the education provider discussed how they would ensure all learners have access to practice-based learning. For example, they explained their intention to use the pairing system (2 to 1 model) to ensure practice-based learning capacity. However, there were no clear processes or policies to indicate how this model would be sustained in the long term. In addition, due to lack of detail, the visitors were unclear about the level of commitment from practice education providers, given their commitment to other education providers in the region. As such, the visitors could not determine that the education provider has an effective process in place to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners on the programme. They therefore require further evidence to demonstrate this standard is met.

#### **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 will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

**Reason:** In their review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors identified that practice education providers were committed to taking learners from this programme. However, it was unclear as to whether staffing levels could sufficiently support learners from this education provider in addition to the other learners in the region because such information was not provided in the submission. As the education provider had not demonstrated there was an effective process in place for ensuring staff involvement in practice-based learning, the visitors were unclear about how the education provider will have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to assure them that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver practice-based learning to all learners on this programme.

#### **6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure it clearly specifies the requirements for progression and achievement in practice-based learning.

**Reason:** The visitors reviewed the Taught Masters handbook and the Student Handbook where they saw the three exit awards that will be awarded to learners who are ineligible to receive the MSc Nutrition and Dietetics award. The visitors were clear that the exit awards would not give eligibility to apply on to the Register.

The visitors also reviewed the programme specification and the individual module specifications. From their review, the visitors noted that the practice-based learning elements of the programme are embedded within The Professional Dietitian and Reflection and Consolidation of Practice modules. The visitors also noted that the requirements of practice-based learning components were a pass / fail. However, it was not clear what would happen in the event where a learner failed the practice-based

learning component of a module. Through discussions with the programme team, the visitors understood that learners would get a second attempt at a placement assessment. However, if learners failed on the second attempt, they would not be eligible to receive the MSc Nutrition and Dietetics award but would receive the credit for the module. This means they could be eligible for one of the exit awards depending on the number of credits. The visitors noted that this information was not explicit in the programme handbook, programme specification or the individual module specifications. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how learners will be aware of the requirements for progression in practice-based learning. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence that the programme documentation clearly reflects the requirements for progression and achievement and how this will be communicated to learners. In this way, the visitors can determine whether the programme meets this standard.

## 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 one 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.

#### **3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that the process in place to ensure the availability of practice-based learning for all learners on the programme is effective.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** In their evidence for this condition, the education provider submitted one memorandum of understanding (MoU) from one of their placement providers – Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (NLAG) and a letter of support from another provider - Humber NHS Teaching Foundation Trust. They also provided a fair share spreadsheet detailing practice - based learning capacity and allocations for the Dietetics programme at this education provider and other providers in the region, amongst other documents. From this, the education provider demonstrated that they are working with and getting support from other providers of dietetic education within the North East and Yorkshire partnership. However, it remained unclear what process the education provider themselves have in place to ensure placements will be allocated in a way that ensures all learners on this programme are able to access practice-based learning.

The visitors noted that the pairing system (2 to 1 model) has been justified in the response submitted, but the system to ensure the model works and how the education provider would manage situations where the model does not work was not explained. For instance, in terms of education prior to the placement (for preparing both the learner and the external practice-based learning site) and the support required on an ongoing basis to ensure this model remains viable.

The visitors also noted an email from the Chair of the North East and Yorkshire partnership suggesting that any suitable unused capacity from local providers can be

shared across the new North East and Yorkshire partnership. Although the email referred to the Terms of Reference for the North East and Yorkshire Partnership, the visitors noted that Terms of Reference itself was not included in the submission.

Considering the lack of clarity around how all of these systems work when combined together as a process, the visitors were still unable to determine how the education provider ensures the availability and capacity of practice-based learning that meets the learning needs of all learners. They therefore request that the education provider submit further evidence of how the systems in place work in combination to outline an effective process to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

**Suggested documentation:**

The visitors require the education provider to submit additional evidence which demonstrates the effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. This may include:

- a narrative of how the education provider works with other providers in the region to allocate placements and how additional capacity may be shared amongst each provider. For example, this may include the Terms of Reference for The North East and Yorkshire Partnership, or the agreed fair share model of allocation within the partnership.
- evidence that shows that using the dietetic workforce at the practice education providers, there is a verified plan to meet and expand the placements that will support the learner numbers on the programme.

**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 will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

**Reason condition not met at this time:** The visitors reviewed similar evidence as with SET 3.6. This included:

- One MoU from one of their placement providers – Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (NLAG) and a letter of support from another provider - Humber NHS Teaching Foundation Trust.
- The capacity and Work Time Equivalent fair share spreadsheet with details of proposed allocations for the Dietetics programmes in the region.
- The Placement Expansion Strategy which provides further justification for the pairing system (2 to 1 model) of practice-based learning.
- The email from the Chair of the North East and Yorkshire partnership.

The visitors noted that the fair share allocation model utilises all staff within the dietetic team including support workers and administrative staff, giving them equal weighting, suggesting an equal contribution to the delivery of practice-based learning. The visitors were unclear whether, and how, administrative staff would be involved in direct training of learners. From this, the visitors were unable to identify how utilising non-registered staff justifies that there is a suitable number of staff in practice-based learning, for the number of learners and the level of support specific learners need.

In addition, the visitors noted that the pairing system (2 to 1 model) has been justified further in the response submitted, but the system to ensure the model works and how

the education provider would manage situations where the model does not work was not explained. For instance, in terms of education prior to the placement (for preparing both the learner and the external practice-based learning site) and the support required on an ongoing basis to ensure this model remains viable.

The visitors also noted that the email from the Chair of the North East and Yorkshire partnership suggests that any suitable unused capacity from local providers can be shared across the new North East and Yorkshire partnership. Although the email referred to the Terms of Reference for the North East and Yorkshire Partnership, the visitors noted that the Terms of Reference itself was not included in the submission.

The visitors noted that the education provider has different systems in place that they intend to utilise to ensure adequate staffing in practice - based learning. However, considering the lack of clarity around how all of these systems work when combined together as a process, the visitors were still unable to determine that there is an effective process to ensure staffing in practice - based learning is adequate. As such, the visitors require the education provider to submit further evidence that demonstrates this standard is met.

### **Suggested documentation:**

The visitors require the education provider to submit additional evidence which demonstrates the effective process in place to ensure adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in practice – based learning. This may include:

- a narrative of how the education provider demonstrates that using the dietetic workforce at the practice education providers, there is a verified plan to meet and expand number of staff in practice - based learning to support the learner numbers on the programme. For example, clarity evidence that justifies that there is a suitable number of staff involved in direct training of learners, for the number of learners and the level of support specific learners need.
- Details of how the education provider will support the placement sites in delivering the 2:1 model.
- Evidence of the Terms of Reference for the North East and Yorkshire Partnership, including the agreed fair share model of allocation within the partnership.

## **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 25 August 2021 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).