
Approval process visitor report

Education provider	University of Wolverhampton
Institution	Institute of Health
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Podiatry, Full time
Date Assessment commenced	16/12/2021
Visitor recommendation made	01/03/2021
Case reference	CAS-01034-F6M1K7

Summary of findings from this assessment

This a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the University of Wolverhampton, Institute of Health – BSc (Hons) Podiatry 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, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

The outcomes of this process were as follows:

- Further Stage 1 assessment was not required based on the new programme(s) being proposed for delivery.
- The visitors recommended the programme(s) be approved as all programme level standards were met through their Stage 2 assessment.
- The visitors recommended one area to be reviewed through Approved Education Provider monitoring related to the programmes expansion of practice education time.

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 Wolverhampton
Institution	Institute of Health
Accountable person	Sharon Arkell

As part of the initiation of the process the education provider indicated that the proposed programme would be part of the Institute of Health at the University of Wolverhampton. This institute is well established with HCPC and currently delivers programmes in:

- Paramedic Science
- Physiotherapy
- Prescribing

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.

As part of the providers' definition of their institute they have defined the policies, procedures and processes that apply to the programmes delivered within it. 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

Assurance that institution level standards are met

As part of this stage we considered how the proposed programme fit into the named institute by considering any notable changes to the policies, procedures and processes related to the areas above.

We considered there to be no notable changes to way these areas functioned in relation to the new programme. On this basis, we were satisfied it is appropriate for the programme to sit as part of the Institute of Health and take assurance the intuition level standards will continue to be met by its introduction.

Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

Education provider	University of Wolverhampton
Institution	Institute of Health
Accountable person	Joanne Carruthers
Programme	BSc (Hons) Podiatry
Profession	Chiropody/Podiatry
Entitlement	Prescription only medicines – administration Prescription only medicines – sale / supply
Mode of study	Full time
Type of programme	Pre-registration
Qualification level	Undergraduate
Start date	01/09/2021

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

Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

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

Registrant visitors	Wendy Smith – Chiropodist/Podiatrist
	Sharon Weiner-Ogilvie - Chiropodist/Podiatrist

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. The issues we explored are as follows:

- Liability insurance requirements for learners - The visitors sought clarification around the requirements for liability insurance. To ensure that this was appropriately reflected in the profession specific information for potential applicants.
- Numbers of staff involved in teaching - The visitors sought clarification around the numbers of staff involved in teaching the programme and how the established staff from other professions would be involved in the teaching.
- Curriculum terminology and multi-disciplinary working - The visitors had questions related to the terminology referenced in some of the modules and how learners would understand a reflection of working in multi-disciplinary teams.
- Practice-based learning structure and practice educator capacity - The visitor had questions related to the availability of practice educators and how the education provider would ensure they were appropriately registered. The visitors also enquired about how the education provider had consulted with practice education partners around the proposed structure of practice education.

The visitors were satisfied with the provider's approaches in most areas following their detailed documentary review and group discussions. The areas of further investigation listed above were to address medium level risks to the providers approach in certain SETs. The visitors considered the education provider's view around mitigating these risks to be sufficient and so didn't require input external stakeholders or the education provider's partners.

To ensure the education provider had formalised and documented appropriate mitigations for the risks identified, the visitors requested a written response.

Summary of visitor findings

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

The visitors were satisfied that the programme aligns with the level of qualification expected for entry onto the register as a chiropodist / podiatrist. The programme is also aligned to that of level 6 qualifications detailed in the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies.

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

SET 2: Programme admissions

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.

The education provider also highlighted an alternative pathway for entry onto the programme by way of a foundation year offered at the University of Wolverhampton. The visitors also considered this pathway to be suitable for the programme while also ensuring a widening access approach.

The education provider also confirmed their requirements around liability insurance following further enquiry from the visitors and the visitors deemed this approach to suitable.

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

SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

The education provider was able to demonstrate strong links with practice education providers. They confirmed that established providers who had supported the programme when it was delivered by another provider will still provide opportunities when delivered at the University of Wolverhampton. The education provider has also highlighted work with new partners to establish further opportunities and a broader range of practice based learning.

The programme will be staffed by a specific university ratio of profession specific members of staff. The education provider also confirmed that staff from other professions are involved in teaching and delivery where non-profession specific sessions are delivered. As such the visitors were confident that the programme would be supported by sufficient numbers of staff with the relevant expertise.

The education provider also demonstrated the availability of sufficient physical resources that would effectively support learners in the delivery of the programme.

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

SET 4: Programme design and delivery

The visitors considered the programme curriculum to be appropriate for learners to meet the SOPs and be suitably prepared for practice as an autonomous professional. They also noted its mapping to professional body standards highlighting the curriculum's relevance to current practice.

The education provider confirmed that the programme would include a reflection of working within multi-disciplinary teams that the visitors considered important in preparing learners for current practice.

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

SET 5: Practice-based learning

The visitor considered the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning to be suitable for learners to meet the learning outcomes. The visitors also noted that learners would no longer have access to a university clinic as part of the move to a new site of delivery. In reaction to this change the education provider indicated their intention to introduce simulation sessions and an increase in time spent in practice based learning.

Upon further investigation of these plans the visitors were satisfied the types of simulation activities would be appropriate for developing learner's' clinical skills. Furthermore, as the education provider has demonstrated strong links with practice providers and collaboration with new partners, they considered the small increase in practice education time to be proportionate and deliverable. However, as there is an element of risk in this area that is not immediate, they considered that the education provider should reflect on this in their next approved education provider monitoring engagement.

The education provider highlighted that practice educators currently involved in delivery would remain working with the programme as it is delivered with the University of Wolverhampton. As the visitors enquired about increasing this pool for the additional learners, the education provider was able to detail their work with new partners and requirements for practice education staff. Both

around suitability and numbers. They also confirmed that all practice educators would be required to attend training before interacting with learners.

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

SET 6: Assessment

The visitors were able to see how the assessment strategy aligned with spiral curriculum and would enable learners to demonstrate the learning outcomes and SOPs.

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.

Areas to follow up through monitoring

As part of the provider's documentary submission, they highlighted that the transition of delivery from Birmingham Metropolitan College to the University of Wolverhampton would mean that learners would no longer have access to the clinic. As such the Education provider highlighted plans to replace the time spent in the clinic with simulation exercises and an increase in time spent in clinical practice education. The plans would require an increase in practice education of a few weeks for each academic year.

The visitors were able to see plans for increasing the time in practice education and considered the collaboration with partners to be strong and effective. Therefore, they considered the standards to be met related to this issue. However, they recommend that the plans are considered as a theme in the institution's approved education provider monitoring portfolio. This will give the opportunity for a reflection on the implementation of the proposals and for the HCPC to consider any risks following the implementation.

In its next Approved Education Provider portfolio submission, the institution should address:

- The effectiveness of substituting time in a university clinic with increasing time spent in suitable clinical placements in podiatry.
- The effectiveness of the use of simulation to prepare learner which has effectively supported learners to enter practice based learning settings.

Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 26/05/2021.