

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Full time
Approval visit date	10-11 September 2019
Case reference	CAS-14605-D4N2R7

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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:

Susanne Roff	Lay
David Whitmore	Paramedic
Gordon Pollard	Paramedic
Rabie Sultan	HCPC executive

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.

Myra Evans	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of the West of England
Catherine Dyer	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of the West of England

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2014
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 100
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02101

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 had proposed to increase learner numbers by 40 per cohort from February 2019, thus leading to an increase in resources, staffing, practice-based learning placements and practice educators.

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
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	Yes

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice educators	Yes

Programme team	Yes
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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 04 November 2019.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the learning outcomes will ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for paramedics.

Reason: For this standard, the visitors were directed to the programme specification and standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping document. The visitors reviewed the evidence and noted this mapping exercise had used the 2012 version of the HCPC SOPs, and not the most up-to-date version. Additionally, the visitors also noted there was reference made to the HCPC standards of education and training (SETs) 2011 version, not the revised June 2017 edition. They were therefore unable to determine whether these learning outcomes would ensure that learners meet the SOPs and SETs. Furthermore, the visitors noted across various documentations that there were inaccurate references to the QAA Benchmarks Statements and College of Paramedics Curriculum Framework, which the programme team agreed to rectify it. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to update the relevant documentation by referencing the correct versions as stated above, to demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that learners meet the current HCPC SOPs, for the relevant part of the Register.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure there is an effective process in place for obtaining consent from learners.

Reason: The visitors were directed to view the 'practical session consent form' and 'professional suitability and conduct policy and procedure' documents, as evidence for

this standard. From reviewing the evidence, the visitors noted the consent form is a generic form used across different programmes taught across the university. The education provider also stated in the mapping document that learners will be involved in a range of active learning tasks including the use of role play. It was also stated in the mapping document that participation in practical sessions is an essential component of the programme and any learner who does not wish to complete the consent to participate form must make an appointment to meet with the programme leader as a matter of urgency. If any learner still does not wish to complete the consent form following this meeting, then the matter would be explored under the education provider's professional suitability and conduct policy.

From reviewing the evidence and consent form provided, the process gave an impression that learners might not have an option to opt out, should they decline to participate in practical sessions such as role plays. Therefore, the visitors could not determine if there is a method of getting consent from learners with the option of opting out, should they wish to. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate there are effective processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from learners in order to for the visitors to make a judgement as to whether this standard is met.

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 26 November 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](#).

