
Approval process report

Birmingham City University, diagnostic radiography, 2021-22

Executive Summary

This is a report on the approval process undertaken to review diagnostic radiography apprenticeship provision at Birmingham City University. This assessment was undertaken as part of our quality assurance model in the 2021-22 academic year.

In our review, we considered the programme meets all the standards of education and training.

There are no referrals and issues to highlight. This report will now be considered by our Education and Training Panel on 28 February 2023, who will make the final decision on the approval.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval process was not referred to from another process interaction.
------------------------	---

Decision The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide whether the programme is approved
----------	--

Next steps Subject to the Panel's decision, the programme will commence in March 2023.
------------	---

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment.....	3
About us.....	3
Our standards.....	3
Our regulatory approach.....	3
The approval process	3
How we make our decisions.....	4
The assessment panel for this review	4
Section 2: Institution-level assessment	4
The education provider context	4
Practice areas delivered by the education provider	5
Institution performance data	5
The route through stage 1	6
Admissions	6
Management and governance	7
Quality, monitoring, and evaluation	8
Learners	9
Outcomes from stage 1	11
Section 3: Programme-level assessment.....	11
Programmes considered through this assessment	11
Stage 2 assessment – provider submission	11
Quality themes identified for further exploration.....	12
Quality theme 1 – plans to increase the National Student Survey (NSS) score.....	12
Quality theme 2 – collaboration with practice providers.....	13
Quality theme 3 – learner access to resources while off-campus.....	14
Quality theme 4 – availability of practice-based learning.....	14
Quality theme 5 – integration of theory and practice-based learning.....	15
Quality theme 6 – process to access to a range of practice-based learning to ensure standards of proficiency (SOPs) are met	16
Quality theme 7 – knowledge, skills and experience of practice educators.....	17
Section 4: Findings	17
Conditions.....	17
Section 5: Referrals	20
Recommendations	20
Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes	20
Assessment panel recommendation	20
Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution	22

Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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.

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers 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 regulatory approach

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

Providers 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

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance 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 approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

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 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. 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 takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Rachel Picton	Lead visitor, Diagnostic Radiographer
Shaaron Pratt	Lead visitor, Diagnostic Radiographer
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 30 HCPC-approved programmes across nine professions. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since September 1993.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Dietitian	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2016
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2012
	Physiotherapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1993
	Speech and language therapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2001
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing		2007	

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	1,497	1,344	2021/22	The enrolled number of learners supplied by the education provider is slightly lower than the numbers we have approved and note on our record. After assessment of the initial documentation, we did not have any issues to explore further about whether the education provider has the appropriate resources in place.

Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	4%	2021/22	The data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows the percentage of learners not continuing is slightly more than the benchmark which implies learners are generally satisfied with their studies.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	93%	2021/22	The HESA data shows the percentage in employment or further study is the same as the benchmark which implies learners who successfully complete their learning at this institution make significant progress after their studies.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/a	Silver	2021/22	A silver award would indicate the institution is doing well.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	73.8%	58.9%	2022	This score indicates that the percentage of learners who are satisfied with their learning is lower than average. After assessment of the initial documentation, we explored this further as part of quality theme 1 .

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision: Information for applicants –

- Existing policies apply to how applicants find out about programmes, for example, through the website and marketing materials. For degree apprenticeships, this is supplemented by the employer. They advertise the apprenticeship role, provide a job description and finalise banding

salary for the post. The education provider and employers work together to shortlist applicants and carry out a joint interview process. Offers are then made by the education provider to successful applicants. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The Admissions Policy applies for English language, enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service checks and occupational health clearance. The education provider and employer undertake a joint face to face interview with the applicant. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The education provider operates a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process that enables applicants to gain recognition for previous studies and learning that relate to the programme. This applies to apprentices as well as other learner groups and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The education providers Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020 - 2025 outline how individuals who, may not otherwise be able to access the profession, can apply. These ensure each programme receives appropriate data on progression and attainment to consider as part of programme scrutiny. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ –**
 - Existing policies and procedures outline the process of approval from strategic approval through to University / Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body events. For example, BCU Course Approval / Re-approval Policy and Procedures. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure (CME) uses recruitment, retention and outcome data to consider performance and sustainability of each programme. In addition, for degree apprenticeship programmes, work is carried out at a national, regional

¹ This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

and local level to look at the scope and sustainability of this route to ensure it is a viable option for the profession and the education provider. The education provider has worked with the professional body and Health Education England (HEE) to engage employers and seek their commitment to this route of entry into the profession. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - Existing policies, such as, Learning and Teaching Strategy and Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure will apply. The periodic review process reviews the provision of an entire school every five years. Each programme holds an annual quality day which brings together staff, learners, service users, external examiners, and practice colleagues. This quality day informs ongoing course improvements. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - In addition to policies already mentioned, policies, such as Individual Performance Review Policy, will apply. Management of the team ensures support for their development and wellbeing, recruitment of appropriate people into appropriate roles, via school policies / procedures. The team will draw on existing expertise from within the education provider and further afield to support the development of its existing staff group. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - Existing processes and support are in place. For example, the Apprenticeship Partnership Unit which supports degree apprenticeships across the provider. The school liaises with clinical partners and employers, and hosts programme and department level regular clinical placement group meetings. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - The education provider stated that existing processes are in place (such as the Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure outlined earlier). As part of this, module leads and team members review modules and sessions on a yearly basis and integrate this feedback into their modules to enhance academic quality. Those delivering the materials are required to keep themselves up to date via a variety of Continuous Professional Development activities. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - Existing processes are in place such as the Educational Placement Audit Process. This ensures department audits are regularly performed, gaining information on equipment, staffing and service-related activity, to ensure learners receive the range of experiences required and are safe and supported. Regular communications from the education provider to the clinical teams takes place both informally through regular personal tutor visits, MS Teams calls and formal lines including practice educator training. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learner involvement –**
 - Existing processes are in place. Opportunities for feedback for all learners include:
 1. Mid module evaluations
 2. End of placement evaluations
 3. Student survey
 4. Student representative led forums
 5. Professional student society

The programme lead will regularly meet with learners to establish views in relation to all activity relating to the programme and their experiences both formally and informally. The team operate an 'open door' policy and through the personal tutor role ensure regular catchups offering the opportunity for feedback on a regular basis. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
 - The Monitoring of Service User and Carer Involvement Process is an existing process. Examples of involvement include open days, interviews, simulation, on-line and face to face teaching. Service users are actively consulted regarding curriculum development of all existing and future provision. Within the school, there is a group of service users who input both through sharing their experiences and also involvement in discussions about developments. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - A range of existing education provider processes are in place. Within the academic environment, all learners are allocated a named personal tutor to support them through their programme and to signpost them to the wider support the institution offers. Whilst in work environment, learners will have access to a mentor whose role will be to support

them at this specific time. Learners can access the health and well-being teams, as well as other services such as the student union and Graduate Success Support Advisors. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - Existing processes are in place. Learners are encouraged to speak to their personal tutor and course leads regarding any concerns / suitability. The education provider has policies in relation to the Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practice and Disciplinary Policy, with associated levels of discussion with learners. This means starting with informal, but recorded discussion, before moving to more formal discussions to enable oversight of learner's reflective development in relation to identified issues. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - Existing processes are in place. The programme will sit within the Faculty of Health Education and Life Sciences and there will be a range of opportunities to learn with, and from, learners and apprentices from a range of professions. There will be opportunity to engage in joint simulation and collaborative working activities in the academic environment. Particularly within placement and the workplace, apprentices will have the opportunity to learn about the roles of other professionals from a range of sectors. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - Existing processes are in place, such as the 2021/22 – 2024/25 Access and Participation Plan. A range of support services is provided by the education provider to enable all learners, regardless of disability, health condition or learning difficulty, to access their chosen programme. The programme team will respond to the needs of a learner with an identified disability, in conjunction with Student Support Services. This includes reasonable adjustments within the practice and academic settings. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - Existing processes are in place, such as the University Academic Regulations Fourth Edition (September 2021). There is a clear Assessment and Feedback Policy that guides programme teams through a structured and rigorous process. This includes internal and external verification, regular meetings of the marking team, moderation

from outside the marking team, and External Examiner reviews. These processes will be made clear to learners throughout the programme to ensure they are aware of this process and how this process is objective. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Progression and achievement** –
 - The Academic Regulations Fourth Edition (September) 2021 and Course Monitoring and Enhancement Policy and Procedure and Programme ensure appropriate progress and achievement rules are in place and subsequently monitored. Programme leaders have access to module specific information and implement interventions and enhancements as required. A HEI Extenuating Circumstances (EC) procedure is also available to learners. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Appeals** –
 - Existing processes are in place, such as the Academic Appeal Procedure and Extenuation Circumstances procedure. They will be used in relation to this programme. These processes are led by the Student Governance team. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Radiographer - Diagnostic radiographer	10 learners per cohort, one cohort per year	30/03/2023

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

Quality theme 1 – plans to increase the National Student Survey (NSS) score

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the NSS overall satisfaction score was 58.9 percent, compared with a benchmark figure of 72.7 percent in 2021. The visitors explored how the education provider had considered the reasons for this score and whether they had implemented any initiatives or plans in response to improve learner feedback.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this initially by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Following their review of the initial response, the visitors recognised the significant improvement in the overall NSS score and that plans were in place. However, they remained unclear about any actions, initiatives or timeframes included in these plans to improve learner satisfaction. We decided to explore this area by a virtual meeting with representatives of the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which multiple participants are needed to ensure issues can be explored fully.

Outcomes of exploration: During the first quality activity, the education provider informed us the overall satisfaction NSS score for the latest year (2022) had risen to 73.2 percent. The 2022 benchmark was 73.8 percent meaning the overall difference was less than one percent. They went on to explore profession specific scoring and outlined how the approved diagnostic radiography programme had a score of 58.3 percent. The education provider explained action plans are in place to increase satisfaction scores across programmes and the education provider.

During the second quality activity, the education provider explained the impact COVID-19 had on learners. They stated many of their learners came from communities who were affected by digital poverty and more susceptible to anxiety. We understood this made it more difficult for some learners to access support online

and to come onto the campus and interact with peers. We recognised how this may have impacted on the NSS scores for 2021.

The education provider explained they have well-established processes in place for responding to quality issues and had a clear plan for responding to those raised by learners. An action plan was developed in response to concerns raised by learners with an escalation process commencing at school level. The education provider outlined how the implementation of this plan will result in an improved learner experience and this will be reflected through the NSS scores. We understood the education provider has clear and effective plans and processes to improve learner satisfaction and therefore, the NSS scores. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activities adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 2 – collaboration with practice providers

Area for further exploration: The visitors received the agenda and minutes for the existing Clinical Placement Liaison Group (CPLG) running for the approved diagnostic radiography programme. The visitors understood that practice placement providers attend the CPLG which considers placement issues and would apply to the proposed programme. The education provider explained, that in addition, a new Clinical Apprenticeship Liaison Group (CALG) group will be set up for the proposed programme. The visitors were unsure how the two groups will work together and share information between themselves.

The education provider also made reference to tripartite reviews between the programme team, employer and learner. However, no further evidence was provided, and the visitors were unclear about the purpose of these, how they will be conducted and who will lead.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that CALG meetings will include the programme team, apprenticeship leads from the faculty, and managers and placement educators from employers. This meeting will focus on employer and partner liaison. The agenda for CALG and CPLG meetings will feature, as a standing agenda item, feedback from the opposite group.

The education provider informed us tripartite reviews are to ensure the learner is making appropriate progress in achieving the learning outcomes. They are held every 12 weeks throughout the programme. These meetings are a requirement of all apprenticeship programmes. They have a standard format, with documentation available and kept on Apprenticeship Management System. The education provider explained that administration for the meetings is completed by the programme team,

but the meetings are designed to ensure equity of approach from all three stakeholders. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activity adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 3 – learner access to resources while off-campus

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the facilities available for learners and staff on the programme for example, the library facilities. The documentation stated most library resources are available on-line and off-campus. The visitors were conscious most of the learner's time is spent off-campus and wondered if learners would be able to access library facilities from NHS sites. For example, due to the firewall restrictions or a lack of dedicated time to access the internet / resources. The visitors therefore sought information about how learners can access all available resources, while recognising they are mainly off-campus.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained all employers support additional study time to allow learners to access support and resources whilst off-campus. We were informed learners will have access to the library, internet, and study facilities at their employment base. This includes access to the NHS knowledge and library hub through their Trust. The education provider's library service prioritises electronic formats for its resources which ensures learners can access e-books, electronic journals, and databases from anywhere with an internet connection.

The education provider's Mary Seacole Library operates extended opening hours (8am – 9pm during the week and 10am – 5pm at weekends). Library support is available in person and online. We also understood the education provider's online chat service is staffed by librarians 24 hours a day and offers help with common questions, for example about referencing and information searching. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activity adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 4 – availability of practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The visitors received the agenda and minutes for the Clinical Placement Liaison Group (CPLG) from the approved diagnostic radiography programme. From this, the visitors noted some concerns about placement capacity for the approved programme. They were therefore unsure whether, or how, the increase in learners, due to the proposed programme, will affect placement capacity. They therefore sought more information about how the education provider had

ensured the proposed programme guarantees there is practice-based learning for all learners.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider outlined how placement capacity is an ongoing discussion point at Clinical Apprenticeship Liaison Group (CALG) meetings. The nature of degree apprenticeship programme ensures employers are involved from the beginning. This means employers are able to source appropriate placements for the applicant prior to applying to the programme. In addition, regular contact is maintained between placement providers and the programme teams through placement link tutors. The number of learners for the proposed programme are currently small (10 learners with one cohort a year). The visitors understood many current pre-registration placement providers also have apprentice diagnostic radiographers studying from other education providers. The education provider stated due to flexibility of apprenticeship work-based learning, the impact on placement capacity will be minimal. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activity adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 5 – integration of theory and practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the programme plan identified when learners were scheduled to be on campus, in work-based learning, and on placement. However, the visitors were unsure how these areas of learning were integrated, so the timing of theory and subsequent practice-based learning were compatible. They therefore sought more information about the timing and integration of academic and practice-based learning, so learners can apply knowledge to practice at an appropriate time.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider supplied details of the modules and full schedule for the proposed programme. The visitors noted when academic content is delivered on campus and how this is put into practice through work-based and practice-based learning. We understood each module of the programme will have both a learner and a practice educator guide. This will outline content which is delivered when learners are on-campus and is supported through Moodle when learners are in the work-based or practice setting. The education provider outlined how learners will be supported by practice educators to develop theory and practice whilst undertaking work-based learning. They stated employers and the programme team will liaise so learners will be allocated work-based learning areas which will

enable development of both theoretical knowledge and practice relevant to the modules being studied. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activity adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 6 – process to access to a range of practice-based learning to ensure standards of proficiency (SOPs) are met

Area for further exploration: The education provider informed us the employer commits to enabling the learner to be able to access a range of appropriate practice opportunities to meet the requirements of the programme and the SOPs. The visitors did not receive further information about how the employer will ensure this occurs. The visitors were therefore unclear of the process if the employer does not offer the full range of placement experiences required to support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We initially decided to explore this area by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Following their review of the initial response, the visitors remained unsure about how the education provider, who has overall responsibility for the programme, ensures all learners meet the learning outcomes of the programme and the SOPs. Therefore, we sought additional documentation about how the education provider ensures this. We decided to explore this area by meeting with representatives of the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which multiple participants are needed to ensure issues can be explored fully.

Outcomes of exploration: Initially, the education provider informed us, while it was the employer's responsibility to ensure the appropriate opportunities were available, the programme team will provide guidance and facilitate contacts. A guide for employers will be provided prior to the programme starting. This will ensure employers are aware of the requirements of the programme and the learning needed to be undertaken during work-based learning. During development of the programme, all employers stated they would be willing to provide practice-based learning for learners who need additional or different clinical experience.

During the second quality activity, the education provider explained practice assessors, mentors and the Apprenticeship Partnership Unit will work together to enable the learner to achieve the learning outcomes and the SOPs. This will take place through mechanisms such as apprenticeship contracts, assessment of competencies, and tripartite meetings. These will be responded to and monitored at an informal and, if necessary, formal level and appropriate remedial action taken. For example, it had already been identified that one Trust would be unable to provide paediatric placements. This has already been factored into the planning to ensure

learners achieve the required SOPs. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activity adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 7 – knowledge, skills and experience of practice educators

Area for further exploration: The education provider informed us they liaise with employers to ensure staff involved in practice-based learning have the relevant knowledge and experience. We noted the educational placement audit asks for information about the number of practice educators involved at each placement setting. The visitors, however, were not clear about what knowledge, skills or experience the education provider required practice educators to have to support learners. They therefore sought further information.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: We understood all learners must have a named practice educator to support and direct their work-based learning. This individual should be an experienced radiographer, band 6 or above, who is a permanent member of staff. An established practice educator training programme is in place. Training and updates for practice educators will take place before and throughout the programme. These will take the form of online workshops provided by the programme team and other specialists from the education provider. Each module will be supported by a practice educator guide as well as a briefing from module leads prior to the start of the module. They are being developed to support all the education provider's allied health professions and is a development within the School of Health Sciences. We were satisfied with the evidence provided and considered the quality activity adequately addressed the issues raised.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.

- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
 - Selection and entry criteria were clear and set at an appropriate level for an apprenticeship programme. The criteria included qualifications at GCSE level or equivalent, an Enhanced DBS check and occupational health clearance.
 - The process to apply for the programme was clearly outlined with employer and education provider involvement. The education provider makes the final decision on eligibility to join the programme.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
 - Through [quality activity 2](#), there was evidence of regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers to discuss placement issues.
 - Through [quality activity 4](#), the education provider outlined the process to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for learners on the proposed programme.
 - The education provider ensures an appropriate number of staff, both within the profession and wider school to effectively deliver the proposed programme. They also outlined the resources available within the research and library teams.
 - Subject areas are delivered by educators with relevant specialist experience and knowledge.
 - Through [quality activity 3](#), the education provider demonstrated the range of services and support available to learners while on and off campus.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
 - Through the module descriptors and mapping document, visitors noted the learning outcomes were clearly outlined for the degree apprenticeship programme.
 - In addition, expectations of professional behaviour, standards of conduct and performance and ethics were clear in the module descriptors. If necessary, the education provider will utilise the Fitness to Practice, though for learners on a degree apprenticeship programme, the employer process could also be followed.
 - The philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base were clearly articulated in the Course Specification and Course Handbook.
 - There was clear evidence of the curriculum being relevant to current practice, including via the recent College of Radiographer accreditation process.
 - Via [quality activity 5](#), it was clear how theory and practice were linked to the learning that the apprentices will undertake across the work-based and practice-based learning.
 - A wide variety of teaching and learning methods were appropriately outlined in the Course Handbook. The module descriptors also outlined the learning activities for each learning outcome.
 - Autonomous and reflective thinking, and evidence-based practice is appropriately outlined in the module descriptors, delivery methods and in the Practice Assessment Document.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - Through [quality activity 6](#), the visitors noted the process to ensure an appropriate range of practice-based learning was provided to ensure the learners were able to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs).
 - Work-based and practice-based learning were clearly integrated into the programme with appropriate and timely learning outcomes.
 - The visitors noted the process to ensure an adequate number of practice educators. However, initially they were unsure of the knowledge, skills and experience the education provider required of practice educators. This was clarified through [quality activity 7](#).
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 6: Assessment –**
 - Through the module descriptors and mapping document, visitors noted the learning outcomes, and associated assessments, were clear for the proposed programme. These, together with the assessment strategy, demonstrate how learners will be able to demonstrate the standards of proficiency.

- A range of assessment methods, appropriate to the learning outcomes, are clearly outlined across the proposed programme. These were outlined in the module descriptors.
- The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval, focused review, or performance review process).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

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. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that all standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved

Reason for this decision: We are making this recommendation as the programme meets the institutional level standards as previously approved policies and processes will be used for the proposed programme. In addition, we are making this recommendation as, data and additional information received through the quality activities, shows the programme meets the relevant standards of education and training and successful graduates of the programme, will meet the relevant standards of proficiency.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The programme is approved

Reason for this decision: We are making this recommendation as the programme meets the institutional level standards as previously approved policies and processes will be used for the proposed programme. In addition, we are making this recommendation as, data and additional information received through the quality activities, shows the programme meets the relevant standards of education and training and successful graduates of the programme, will meet the relevant standards of proficiency.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
MSc Dietetics (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/01/2018
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/08/2016
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice (South West) Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/03/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/03/2021
BSc Hons Operating Department Practice (South West)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/01/2020
DipHE Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2001
DipHE Operating Department Practice (South West)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/01/2018
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2014
Dip HE Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2012
MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2018
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/1993
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	PT (Part time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/1993

BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer	01/01/2003	
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy	PT (Part time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer	01/09/2003	
MSc Therapeutic Radiography (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer	01/01/2023	
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist		01/09/2001	
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	PT (Part time)	Speech and language therapist		01/09/2001	
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist		09/01/2023	
MSc Speech and Language Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist		01/01/2020	
Non-medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2007
Non-medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2007
Non-Medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Undergraduate)	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Undergraduate)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Undergraduate) (Conversion)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014

Principles of Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Post Graduate)	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Principles of Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Post Graduate)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Principles of Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Post Graduate) (Conversion)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Principles of Prescribing for Health Care Professionals	FT (Full time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/10/2010
Principles of Prescribing for Health Care Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/10/2010