

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Nottingham Trent University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Full time MSc Paramedic Science, Full time BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Work based learning
Approval visit date	16 – 17 October 2019
Case reference	CAS-13714-M3T0F6

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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:

Louise Towse	Lay
Gemma Howlett	Paramedic
Vincent Clarke	Paramedic
Temilolu Odunaike	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.

Michelle Pepin	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Nottingham Trent University
Debra Holder-Newsam	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Nottingham Trent University

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
Proposed First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02027

Programme name	MSc Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
Proposed First intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02116

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	WBL (Work based learning)
Profession	Paramedic
Proposed First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 40
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02137

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite 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
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
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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	Comments
Learners	Yes	As all three programmes are new, we met with learners who have just completed the Ambulance Medical Technician programme.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	
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 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 28 November 2019.

### 2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

**Condition:** The education provider must clarify the selection and entry criteria for the MSc programme and demonstrate how these are appropriate to the programme.

**Reason:** In their review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted in the MSc course descriptor that part of the entry requirement was stated as "an undergraduate degree (minimum 2.2) or other recognised equivalent qualification in a healthcare profession, for example in: nursing, midwifery or an allied health profession". At the visit, the senior team informed the visitors that applicants with an undergraduate degree in a

non-healthcare profession, for instance geography, would also be considered, provided they have experience in a healthcare related profession. In the programme team meeting, some members of the team informed the visitors that MSc applicants would need to hold an undergraduate degree or other recognised equivalent qualification in a healthcare profession in order to be considered, while other members said applicants with non-healthcare qualifications would also be considered. From the information provided in the programme documentation and through discussions at the visit, the visitors were not clear that the education provider had fixed entry requirements onto the MSc programme, whether the entry requirements are appropriate to the level and content of the programme, and that this is clearly documented. The visitors therefore require further clarification on the selection and entry criteria onto the MSc programme to determine whether this standard is met. Specifically, the visitors need to see evidence of the information provided to applicants which clearly sets out all of the relevant academic and professional entry standards for the MSc programme.

### **3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

**Reason:** To demonstrate how this standard is met, the education provider directed the visitors to the curriculum vitae (CV) of the programme lead, the faculty structure, the programme team and the education provider's process of recruiting a programme lead. From reviewing these documents, the visitors could see that the education provider had a process for appointing the individual with overall professional responsibility for the programmes. However, the visitors noted that, although the individual currently holding overall professional responsibility for the programmes is appropriately qualified and experienced, they were not on the relevant part of the Register and the visitors could not see any other appropriate arrangements made. During discussions at the visit, the senior team informed the visitors that they will be recruiting an additional member of staff, who will be on the relevant part of the Register and who will also undertake part of the leadership responsibilities for the programmes. The visitors understood from the discussions that the education provider had plans to recruit a registered paramedic to assist in the leadership of the programme. However, they were not clear about the specific roles this individual will undertake as far as the programme leadership is concerned. The visitors considered that in order to determine whether this standard is met, the education provider needs to provide detailed information about the other arrangements they have in place to ensure the person(s) holding overall professional responsibility for the programmes are appropriate to undertake the role.

### **3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that they have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

**Reason:** As evidence for this standard, the visitors were referred to the staff CVs and the staffing development plan. From their review of the documents, the visitors noted that the education provider had not yet fully recruited for the number of programmes to be delivered. At the visit, the senior team informed the visitors that plans to recruit additional staff members had been agreed, with a business plan that reflects a staff to student ratio of 1:19. The senior team further explained that this would mean an additional member of staff is recruited within a month of the visit and a second staff member within two months of the visit. As the additional staff are yet to be recruited, the visitors were unclear about who would be delivering the different aspects of the programme and were unable to determine how there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver the programme effectively. The visitors also considered that the education provider would need to provide evidence of the contingency plan they have in place should the recruitment of the two additional staff fail to materialise. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that there is, or will be, an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver all three programmes effectively.

### **3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that subject areas will be taught by staff with the relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

**Reason:** In a review of the documentation and in discussions with the programme and senior teams, the visitors heard that a number of additional posts are to be recruited to the teaching team to deliver all three programmes. However, the visitors were not able to ascertain what the education provider's requirements are as regards the qualifications and experiences of these new members of staff and how this relates to the curriculum taught on the programmes. The visitors heard from discussions in the programme team meeting that a current member of the team could deliver lectures on critical care and another member could deliver lectures on mental health. The visitors were also made aware of members of staff in the Social Work and Nursing departments who are well suited to deliver classes on safeguarding for instance, and other specialist areas can be delivered by staff members on programmes that currently exist. Whilst the visitors understood from the discussions that there were existing educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise who could deliver some subject areas on the programmes, they could not see how these individuals will be used in the new programmes as this was not made clear in the programme documentation. As such, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates how the education provider will ensure that subject areas will be taught by staff with the relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

### **5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.**

**Condition:** The structure, duration and range of non-ambulance practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors reviewed a number of documents, including the practice placement agreement between the education provider and their practice placement providers, the placement section of the student handbook, the delivery plan

and the practice placement educator's document. At the visit, the visitors met with practice educators from the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EMAS). From their documentation review and through discussions at the visit, the visitors were made aware that a large percentage of practice-based learning will be provided by EMAS. Other NHS Trusts, including Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Sherwood Hospitals Foundation Trust and Nottingham City Care Partnerships would also provide practice-based learning to all learners on the programme. The visitors also understood from their documentation review and through discussions at the visit that the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning (PBL) provided by EMAS would support the achievement of the learning outcomes. However, the visitors were unclear how the non-ambulance practice-based learning (provided by the other four placement providers) would support the achievement of learning outcomes for those placements, as they could not find information about this within the programme documentation. In discussions with the non-ambulance practice educators from one of the partner hospital trusts, the visitors were informed that the hospital, at any given time, will usually have a one-year plan for delivering practice-based learning. However, there was no evidence provided to demonstrate how this plan will support learners in achieving the learning outcomes for those placements and the standards of proficiency. The visitors were therefore unclear how non-ambulance practice-based learning would support learners in achieving the appropriate learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating how they will ensure the structure, duration and range of non-ambulance practice-based learning is appropriate for the achievement of the learning outcomes, to determine whether this standard is met.

#### **5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clarify the roles and responsibilities for learners on the programme who are already registered professionals.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors reviewed the university's quality handbook, the Placement Agreement and the Practice Placement Quality Assurance documents. All through their review, the visitors could not see any consideration around scope of practice in practice-based learning, particularly for the MSc learners who may be registered healthcare professionals. Through discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider expects learners from different healthcare professions to operate as a student paramedic. However, it was unclear whether they were to remain under the scope of a student paramedic regardless of their knowledge, skills and scope of practice in their other professions. The visitors noted that, in practice, there may be incidents where learners do not act within their scope of practice as a registered professional. This might impact on patient safety, and on the registration status of these individuals. It is not for the HCPC to define how these situations should be managed, and the visitors noted the complexities of ensuring registered professionals act in a way which enables them to learn and meet competencies as a student paramedic. However, the visitors considered that learners who are also registered in another profession should have clear and legally sound advice about how to act in these situations, to mitigate risks to patient safety and to their own professional registration. As such, the visitors were unable to determine whether practice-based learning ensures a safe environment for learners and service users. The visitors therefore require further

evidence which clarifies the scope of practice for learners from other healthcare professions operating as student paramedics on the programme.

**5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that learners are supervised by practice educators with relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning all through their practice-based learning.

**Reason:** As evidence for this standard, the visitors were referred to Appendix 9 – Practice Placement Educators document. The visitors also reviewed the Placement Service Level Agreement document. From their review, the visitors understood practice educators are expected to have completed a mentorship or practice education course and have registration with the HCPC, the General Medical Council (GMC) or the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) before they can take on learners in practice-based learning. The education provider also stated in the Placement Service Level Agreement document that learners will work at least 60% of their hours with a named practice educator and other Trust clinical staff may support learners' learning for the other 40% of the time. When asked at the visit, practice educators from EMAS NHS Trust explained that any clinical staff who will be involved in providing practice-based learning would have had to complete a 3-day practice educator training course before they can undertake this role. The visitors considered that this information is not clear in the programme documentation and as such they could not determine how the education provider will ensure that all practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills, and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, are on the relevant part of the Register. The visitors therefore require additional evidence to be reassured that learners on the programmes will be supervised by suitable practice educators, not other 'clinical staff', all through their practice-based learning, before they can consider this standard as met.

**6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be appropriately qualified and experienced, and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were referred to Section 9 (External examining) of the Nottingham Trent University quality handbook and the Appointment or extension to external examiner position, frequently asked questions document. From their review of these documents, the visitors could see that the education provider has a process for appointing an external examiner for the programme. However, it was not evident in the documentation that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register, unless other arrangements are agreed with the HCPC. At the visit, the programme team agreed that the documents did not explicitly state that the external examiner must to be on the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are appropriate. As such, the visitors require further evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the external

examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that 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 29 January 2020 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).