

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Newcastle University
Name of programme(s)	Post-graduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology Practice, Full time
Approval visit date	03 - 04 October 2018
Case reference	CAS-13232-R5G9W8

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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:

Jacqueline Bates-Gaston	Practitioner psychologist - Forensic psychologist
Shola Apena Rogers	Practitioner psychologist - Forensic psychologist
Joanne Watchman	Lay
Niall Gooch	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.

Stephen McHanwell	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Newcastle University
Lynn Oakes	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Newcastle University

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Post-graduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology Practice
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Practitioner psychologist
Modality	Forensic psychologist
Proposed first intake	01 January 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01932

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 require 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.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Not required as it is a new programme.

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes

Facilities and resources	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 07 December 2018.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that they will have regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard, including plans for triannual meetings between learners, academic supervisors and work-place supervisors. Based on this evidence and from discussions with the programme team at the visit, it appeared to the visitors that these meetings were more focused on the academic progress of learners, rather than the wider collaboration between education provider and practice education providers. As a result, it was not clear to the visitors that the education provider had regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers which reflected an ongoing relationship and did not only happen when issues arose in practice-based learning. They asked the senior team and programme team about this issue and were given verbal reassurances that they had good relationships with their practice education providers. However, from the meeting with practice educators and practice education providers, the visitors were aware that the settings for practice-based learning were extremely diverse and appeared to work very separately from each other and from the education provider. The visitors could not be sure from this meeting or from other discussions that all practice education providers would have regular communications and an ongoing relationship with the education provider. In particular, it was not clear that the collaboration between the education provider and the practice educators would enable the education provider to give appropriate support to work-based supervisors, and to help the supervisors understand the programme, so that they could provide suitable support for learners and help them achieve the standards of proficiency for forensic psychologists. They therefore require the education provider to demonstrate that collaboration with practice education providers is regular and effective.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must clarify who they consider their service users and carers to be, and how they will be involved in the programme.

Reason: As evidence for this standard, the education provider stated that they had consulted service users and carers in the preparation of the programme, and were in the process of developing a service users and carers' group. The visitors were also able to discuss the involvement of service users and carers with the programme team and senior team. In addition, the visitors were able to meet with a number of people identified as service users by the education provider. As learners who complete the programme will mostly be working within the criminal justice system, these included some representatives of organisations that work with prisoners or ex-offenders. These discussions gave the visitors an idea of the education provider's plans and intentions for the involvement of service users and carers. However, those identified as service users did not appear to the visitors to have a clear understanding of how they were going to contribute to the programme. Staff at the education provider were also not clear about the particular areas where service users and carers would have input, which service users and carers would be involved, how they would be supported, and how their input would be evaluated. The visitors were satisfied that there were plans underway to develop the kind of involvement required by the standard, but they were not clear about the details of how service users and carers would be enabled to contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating that service users and carers will be involved in the programme.

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 clarify the roles and responsibilities of the teaching staff on the programme, and demonstrate that there will be enough staff time available to deliver an effective programme to the number of learners for which they are seeking approval.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard, including a list of the core programme team and their curriculum vitae (CVs), and a statement that other staff would be used on the programme as needed and appropriate. They also discussed staffing with the senior team and programme team. From this evidence and these discussions, they were satisfied that the programme team were appropriately qualified and experienced. However, they were not clear about how much time each of the core team would be able to commit to this particular programme, and how much other staff time would be available to this programme, and as a result they could not determine whether this standard was met. They considered that the lack of clarity about how much staff time would be available to the programme was especially important given two factors:

- that there are a number of psychology programmes at the education provider competing for staff time; and
- that the education provider plans to start with a cohort of six learners in 2019, and then increase that number significantly in 2020, perhaps up to 20 learners, which is the number for which they are seeking approval. This will create significant extra demand for staff availability.

The visitors were given verbal reassurances that there will be appropriate staff capacity at the education provider, both for the first cohort due to start in January 2019 and for the larger cohort planned for January 2020. However, they were not able to see evidence of staff workload planning. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must clarify how they ensure that visiting lecturers who deliver parts of the programme have relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard, including a list of the core programme team and their curriculum vitae, and a statement that other staff would be used on the programme as needed and appropriate. The senior team and programme team stated that visiting lecturers would be used on the programme, to support the core team and supplement the staff available in the School of Psychology. However, it was not clear to the visitors how the education provider would ensure that these staff members have relevant specialist knowledge and expertise, and there did not appear to be a process in place for ensuring that visiting lecturers' skills and knowledge is up to date. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing how the education provider ensures the suitability of visiting lecturers.

3.11 An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators, appropriate to their role in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an effective programme in place to ensure continuing professional and academic development of visiting lecturers.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard, including descriptions of the opportunities available for staff at the education provider to maintain and develop their skills and knowledge. They were satisfied that the standard was met for staff based at the education provider. However, it was not clear to them from this evidence how the education provider would ensure that educators who teach on the programme but are not members of staff at the education provider are keeping their professional and academic skills up to date. The programme team stated that there were opportunities for visiting lecturers to attend training and development activities, but there did not seem to be a process for monitoring visiting lecturers' attendance at these type of events, and their broader training needs. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit more evidence showing how they will ensure that visiting educators maintain their professional and academic skills. They considered that this condition was linked to that set under SET 3.10 above.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: The education provider did not submit evidence regarding inter-professional education (IPE). The visitors were able to discuss with the programme team their approach to IPE. The visitors were aware from these discussions that, although the education provider did not appear to have planned IPE in a systematic way, learners might have access to some IPE. For example, learners in practice-based learning would often be working in multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) including prison officers, police officers and social workers. However, the visitors were not able to determine whether all learners would have access to such opportunities, and how the education provider will ensure that learners have such access. It was also not clear whether learners would have access to IPE involving learners from other professions as well as qualified professionals, or how the education provider had made decisions about the design and delivery of IPE to ensure its relevance. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing how they will ensure that all learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

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 demonstrate how they ensure that practice-based learning takes place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners.

Reason: The visitors reviewed evidence for this standard, including the Programme Agreement Plan. From this document, the visitors were aware that the education provider asked providers of practice-based learning to declare that they would support and supervise trainees appropriately in line with the requirements of the programme. The visitors also viewed a risk assessment document which had to be completed before a learner could be placed in a particular setting. The visitors were not clear from these documents how the education provider would ensure a safe and supportive environment on a continuing basis. They could not see how the Programme Agreement Plan formed part of a process that would generate action if a setting used for practice-based learning ceased to be safe and supportive for some reason. They were not clear how the risk assessment document would be used to ensure that problems which arose could be addressed in an appropriate way. For example, they could not see information regarding the appropriate escalation process in the event that an issue could not be resolved in the practice-based learning setting.

Additionally it was not clear how the education provider addressed the issues that might arise when the practice education provider is also the learner's employer, as the visitors understood will be the case on this programme. The programme team gave verbal assurances to the visitors that any problems occurring on placement around safety and support could be resolved through contacts with the education provider, and if necessary escalated through the education provider's processes. Learners from existing psychology programmes did not express any concerns about this aspect of their experience. However, they were not from programmes where practice-based

learning was provided by employers so were not necessarily placed to speak to this concern.

In light of the above, the visitors require the education provider to provide further evidence showing how they ensure that practice-based learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment for learners.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

Reason: The visitors reviewed evidence for this standard, including the Employer Endorsement & Reference document (EER). From this document, the visitors were aware that the education provider asked practice education providers to declare that they would support and supervise trainees appropriately in line with the requirements of the programme. The visitors also viewed a risk assessment document which had to be completed before a learner could be placed in a particular setting. However, it was not clear to the visitors from these documents how the education provider would ensure specifically that these practice-based learning settings had an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. They could not see how these documents, especially the EER, would generate information for the education provider about the individual staff involved in practice-based learning settings, and so they could not be sure how the education provider would ensure that a suitable number of staff were available for all learners in their practice-based learning. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing how they ensure an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in practice-based learning.

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 demonstrate how they ensure that practice educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, are registered practitioner forensic psychologists.

Reason: The visitors reviewed evidence for this standard, including the Employer Endorsement & Reference document (EER). From this document, the visitors were aware that the education provider asked practice education providers to declare that they would support and supervise trainees appropriately in line with the requirements of the programme. The visitors also viewed a risk assessment document which had to be completed before a learner could be placed in a particular setting. However, it was not clear to the visitors from these documents how the education provider would ensure specifically that these practice-based learning settings had staff who had appropriate knowledge, skills and experience. They could not see how these documents, especially the EER, would capture information for the education provider about the individual staff involved in practice-based learning settings, and so the visitors could not be sure how the education provider would ensure that these staff were suitable. It was also unclear under what circumstances, if at all, the education provider would waive the requirement for practice educators to be registered with the HCPC as forensic psychologists. The

visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing how they ensure that practice educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience, and are on the relevant part of the Register, and under what circumstances they would waive the normal requirement for registration.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must clarify how they monitor the training status of practice educators, and how they ensure additional training where necessary.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard. This included a Work-based briefing on a particular module and a statement that practice educators would receive training "as required". It was not clear to the visitors from this evidence how the education provider ensured that all practice educators undertook appropriate training. They could not see, for example, how the education provider made sure that practice educators had read the Work-based briefing, or how they otherwise met educators' training needs. It was also unclear how the education provider would know what training was required for practice educators. The visitors raised this issue with the programme team, and were told that the education provider made available certain training modules which practice educators could access. However, the visitors were not able to determine how the education provider monitored take-up of, and attendance at, this training, or how they provided refresher training where appropriate. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing how they ensure that practice educators' training is up to date and relevant, and that refresher training is given where appropriate.

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 30 January 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](#).