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## Approval process report

University of Greenwich, Speech and Language Therapy /  
Physiotherapy, 2022-23

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### Executive Summary

This is a report of the ongoing process to approve programmes at University of Greenwich. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area following the exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.
- We have also noted that the provider has originally requested approval for 25 learners for their proposed speech and language therapy programme. They have informed us that they have 34 learners preparing to take up places on the programme. They have also informed us that a member of staff has resigned but they are fast tracking a replacement. They have stated this will mean their staff-learner ratio will be 1:14 once recruited and their wider university-team will be able to support the new programme.

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<b>Previous consideration</b>	This is the education provider's first interaction with the performance review process. Their last annual monitoring was in 2018-19. This is also their first case in our new model
<b>Decision</b>	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• whether the programme(s) are approved.</li></ul>
<b>Next steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The next steps are for this report to be considered by the panel on 31/07/2023 with the visitors' recommendation for approval. This is to be reviewed by panel ahead of the proposed September start date for all programmes.</li></ul>

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## 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 / ongoing 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.

Education 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 education 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 education 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:

Fleur Kitsell	Lead visitor, Physiotherapist
Jo Jackson	Lead visitor, Physiotherapist
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer
Elsbeth McCartney	Support visitor, Speech and Language therapist

As both lead visitors on this case are from a physiotherapy background, we decided to bring in a support visitor to assess the SOPs (standards of proficiency) in regard to the speech and language therapy perspective.

## **Section 2: Institution-level assessment**

### **The Education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers 11 HCPC-approved programmes across 3 professions. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2007.

The education provider previously ran a joint Speech and Language therapy programme with another education provider. This partnership was dissolved and the

last intake on this programme was in 2022. The education provider now seeks to run Speech and Language therapy provision independently and to increase their healthcare provision with the additional proposed Physiotherapy routes.

### Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The education 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
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2011
	Speech and language therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2007

### Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to education provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare education 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	Bench- mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	311	266	2022	<p>The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes.</p> <p>The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the education provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>The value seems to suggest that the actual learner numbers is below the total number of approved learners. However, when we looked at this earlier in the process suggested a value of 351 learners to a benchmark of 266 learners. The visitors were made aware of these figures ahead of their review.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2019-2020	<p>This Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a data delivery – a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the education provider is performing below sector norms</p>

				<p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 3% since the previous year.</p> <p>We explored this by making the visitors aware of this ahead of their review. This was considered by the visitors when making their assessment.</p>
<p>Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study</p>	<p>94%</p>	<p>96%</p>	<p>2019-2020</p>	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is data delivery – a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the education provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 4%</p> <p>We explored this further by making the visitors aware of this ahead of their review. This was considered by the visitors when making their assessment.</p>
<p>Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Silver</p>	<p>June 2017</p>	<p>The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education."</p> <p>The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review. This was considered by the visitors when making their assessment.</p>



National Learner Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	76.1%	75.2%	2022	<p>This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is broadly equal to the benchmark, which suggests the education provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 1%</p> <p>The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review. This was considered by the visitors when making their assessment.</p>
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We also considered intelligence NHSE (NHS England formerly Health Education England, HEE) as follows:

- HEE made us aware that there are shortages in placement places in several profession areas in London and this includes Physiotherapy. NHSE have been in communication with the education provider and have cautioned against the introduction of new programmes citing shortages of placements for these professions. The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review and considered this when examining the programme level specifics of this approval case. We needed to ensure that the education provider was able to demonstrate the sufficient were in place.

### **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. We have used the information supplied by the education provider in conversations, their approval request form and their completed baseline document as part of the stage one review.

## Admissions

### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Information for applicants –**
  - There is a standardised template in place for all programmes on the education providers website to ensure information is correct and meets all potential applicant's requirements. The information provided is designed to assist applicants in making an informed choice of programme. Additional information related to health and DBS requirements and placement experiences must also be included.
  - There are several university-wide open days throughout the year where prospective learners can visit / tour the campus, meet the academic team, and ensure that they have all the information that they need to make an informed choice. The School of Health Sciences which the new programmes will sit within, ensures that academic staff are available at education provider open days to answer questions and provide guidance / advice to prospective applicants.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
  - The university-wide admissions policy is in place and will apply to the proposed programmes as used for other programmes. As part of this policy, they require all learners to demonstrate their English language is sufficient to allow them to successfully complete their studies. In addition, the policy recognises literacy, numeracy & suitability of applicants may be a requirement from a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB). In this instance, the faculty (School) has responsibility for ensuring that entry requirements meet both University and PSRB requirements.
  - Applicants who do not have English as their first language must have an IELTS score of 8.0 or above with no score less than 7.5 or an equivalent rating. Other requirements needed for entry onto the programmes including.
    - Sufficient UCAS points.
    - Minimum GCSE grades in English language.
    - Mathematics and Science.
    - Providing references.
    - Attending an application interview and completing a Suitability Declaration
    - Occupational Health Screening.
    - Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.The education provider has detailed the clear policies in place relating to the assessment of English language character and health requirements and discussed how this will apply to the proposed programmes.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
  - The education provider has an institution-wide prior learning and experience policy titled the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy that will apply to their new provision. They explain that recognition of prior learning is well established at the institution and that the policy has been adapted when applied to the school's provision they require applicants to evidence their RPL claim by mapping their prior learning /

experience to PSRB standards. Within each School, there is an identified lead for RPL, within the faculty there is an RPL committee and processes are overseen by an External Examiner.

- All learners are fully advised about the RPL process and supported with their claim. We found the education provider to have demonstrated they have clear policies in place relating to the recognition of prior learning and experience and can clearly see how this applies to the proposed programmes
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider has referenced both their equality and diversity policy statement from April 2022 and their Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategy & policy as supporting this area. The School of Health Sciences states that they are committed to equal opportunity for all and is required to meet university policy and guidance for equality, diversity, and inclusion. The stated “the school is a vibrant multicultural community where staff and learns work and learn together”. They expect the proposed new programmes will be a positive addition to the school community. We have found that the education provider has clear policies in place, and these shall apply to the new proposed programmes as reflected by the faculty team in the approval request form.

**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 Register<sup>1</sup> –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they have robust management and governance structures & processes in place to ensure that courses meet QAA (quality assurance agency for higher education) standards. Programmes are fully approved, and effectively delivered, with quality embedded and monitored and that appropriate resources are in place to meet the requirements of undergraduate and post graduate education.
  - The School of Health Sciences has developed the proposed programmes to meet these Institution-wide requirements. That QAA and PSRB standards are utilised to ensure that programmes are built with robust structures in place ensuring all learners meet the requirements for degree level study and are eligible for registration. They discuss how this process also requires the academic team to be appropriately qualified, skilled, and experienced to deliver the programmes as required. This is factored into their recruitment processes for required roles to ensure learners have access to fully qualified, experienced staff and work to enrich the learner experience.

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

- They discuss how partners and stakeholders such as practise placement educators were involved in the programme development. They remain involved in ongoing development and post approval would be in place for continued programme improvement and monitoring.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
  - The education provider refers to their rigorous processes related to new programme development. New programmes are discussed within a School and then signed off at Faculty level prior to being approved at university level. They discuss how programmes teams are required to complete detailed proposal forms for new programmes, business plans and ensure they have conducted market research to test demand and demonstrate programme sustainability ahead of internal approval. Additionally, the education provider has an estates plan designed to support expansion of programmes across the Institution and processes around recruitment of staff which all schools follow.
  - The school follows provider level guidance and processes to ensure sufficient resources are in place for the commencement of a programme once approved and meet provider policies in relation to staff recruitment. They reflect on the wealth of experience they have with their staff with nurses from all fields of nursing, midwife's, paramedic practitioners, operating department practitioners, speech and language therapists included.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
  - The education provider has discussed their institutional requirement on quality and monitoring. They explain that programmes are reviewed by their committees and reviewed annually via annual course monitoring where action plans are evaluated and developed for the following year. The effectiveness of the programme is also assessed via data looking at recruitment, attrition, attainment and awarding gap, classification of completing learners and employment. In addition, NSS data is also evaluated to provide an overall picture of the course and to identify areas where improvements are needed. The annual monitoring process also allows risks to be recognised and managed.
  - The education provider has also discussed external examiners input in the effective delivery. They provide scrutiny and oversight assessing the effectiveness of courses and processes.
  - The education provider reflects that they have processes in place at the school level which ensures staff are appropriately experienced and qualified. The programme leads are also appropriately experienced and skilled academics who meets PSRB requirements. The education provider discusses that these normal processes shall also apply to the new provision.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
  - The education provider has a range of HR processes in place that are determined by the education provider and sit at the institutional level, these include appraisal policies, managing attendance & wellbeing, maternity and paternity leave, flexible working, balance academic workload among others. These policies are in place and apply to their individual programmes and the school is required to be compliant in these.

- The School of Health Sciences is divided into sections which are academic portfolios and are led by a section lead who has line manager responsibility for their team. Staff in the School are actively supported to develop their careers and maintain their expertise.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
  - The education provider states that they have strong relationships with external partners and have ambitions to become the “top modern University in the UK by 2030” partnerships are part of realising this ambition. The school they discuss, has strong partnerships with health and social care organisations who provide essential placements for PSRB approved courses.
  - The School Senior Leadership Team includes a Quality Lead for Practice Based Learning who oversees the governance and quality of Practice Based Learning (PBL). The Practice-Based Learning Governance Framework provides clear guidance and includes potential risks and risk management for aspects of practice.
  - The education provider reflects new provision will fall under this governance framework, and this framework will be used to build and maintain new relationships with practice partners, or to continue to maintain existing partnerships.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None**

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Academic quality –**
  - The approval request form states that programmes delivered by the School of Health Science must meet University policies and processes in relation to academic regulation and quality monitoring and evaluation. These include ‘Academic Regulations’, ‘Policies & Procedures for Learners’ and policies around assessment panels and external examiners.
  - The Policies state that external examiners are expected to participate in Subject Assessment Panels, and Progression and Award Boards and comment on all aspects on the delivery and assessment of the programme, raising areas of good practice and of concern as appropriate. Assessment panels are expected to discuss a comparison of performance for this cohort when compared to other previous cohorts, comments from the external examiner and module leader, and any actions arising from such comments or discussions for the future enhancement of the module content and the assessments within the programme of study.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
  - The education provider has set out how there are school level policies around practise-based learning governance and that this contains the onboarding process for new practice learning partners. The University of Greenwich uses the Pan London Practice Learning Group Audit tool to evaluate placement on a 2-yearly basis. If concerns are raised,

placement areas will be audited, and action plans developed as required to ensure the quality of the placement. Practice partners are also invited to the Practice Learning Panel on termly basis which includes self-reporting for quality assurance. Regular meetings between key contacts within the University (Partner Relationship Manager and Link Lecturer) allow for regular monitoring of the practice partners provision.

- They have also detailed how learners complete practice placement evaluations and that information from these is collated and feedback to placement education providers. They also stated that due to the nature of the school's programmes specific safeguarding policies are required to provide a clear process for raising concerns about practice.
- The new provision will take on these processes for new and existing placement education providers.
- **Learner involvement –**
  - There are institution-wide policies in place for learner involvement that the new provision will adhere to. The education provider stated that learners are represented on all key Institution, Faculty & School forums via programme representatives and the learner's union. Learner feedback via national surveys such as the NSS and via internal University surveys are used to develop action plans and inform ongoing development. The learners voice is integral to the effective delivery of all courses including the new provision
  - In the School specifically, learners codesign curriculum via stakeholder meetings and contribute to programme evaluation via termly Programme Committee and cohort meetings.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
  - The education provider stated that the school has a policy regarding service user and carer involvement and that this is integral to the health courses that are developed & delivered in the school. Service users/carers have been involved from inception with the curriculum design via stakeholder meetings.
  - Additionally, there will be service users on the recruitment panel to participate in the admissions process. There are specific modules across the programme where service users will be invited to discuss their experience of living with communication or swallowing difficulties for example

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

### Learners

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Support –**
  - The education provider has institution-wide policies in place regarding personal tutoring and the school have stated they adhere to and will also be applied to the new provision. They also have their 'Learner engagement policy' which is applied within the school, attendance of professional programmes is essential and a PSRB (professional statutory standards body) requirement.

- The education provider also have policies in place regarding extenuating circumstances which will be applied within the school and will be applied to the new provision. They have also discussed their interruption, withdrawal & transfer policy, meaning learners can withdraw and interrupt and are supported in the school to make the right decision for them. PSRB requirements are always upheld particularly where transfer of programme are requested.
- The education provider have also discussed a range of other polices that are in place and are implemented across their existing provision. This includes policies around learners under the age of 18, polices regarding drug and alcohol use, fitness to practise procedures, learner confidentiality, bullying and harassment, pregnancy and maternity among other areas. These polices will all apply to the new proposed provision and are in place across the institution.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
  - The education provider stated the school has policies in place to assess ongoing suitability with all learners being required to complete health and good character declarations at the commencement of the programme at the beginning of year 2 and upon completion of the programme. This is to ensure ongoing suitability in relation to health and good character. This will also apply to any new provision.
  - The education provider also has institution level fitness to practise policies in place that will apply to the new provision and is used in existing provision. The school also implements the Learner Disciplinary policy as required which can link to the fitness to practice policy this will be utilised for the new provision.
  - The education provider also has an institution level social media policy, and the school regularly raises awareness of the Social Media policy which will be utilised for the new provision.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
  - The School of Health Sciences promotes interprofessional learning through shared learning for health courses where learners can learn from and with other learner groups including nursing (all fields) midwifery, paramedic science, operating department practitioners and physiotherapist learners. The new provision will include shared learning in the campus-based settings and interdisciplinary learning in placements.
  - Learner's experience interprofessional learning in placements as part of practise-based learning where they are required to learn from interdisciplinary teams and alongside learners from a range of healthcare disciplines. These policies are in place and being utilised for their existing provision and will apply to any new provision in the school.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider has institution level policies in place for equality, diversity and inclusion and the school ensures that all requirements related to equality, diversity and inclusion are met. The education provider states that they are committed to promoting equality & diversity and providing an inclusive and supportive environment where staff and learners thrive and reach their full potential. The

education provider provides Disability and Dyslexia support via their wellbeing services and all learners have access to these services which are actively promoted by the academic teams. These policies will apply to the new provision.

- The education provider also has policies in place for examinations and assessments for learners with disabilities and specified learning difficulties. This can mean when applied that placement education providers are required to make reasonable adjustments related to a learner's ability to engage with the placement. The Greenwich Inclusion Plan is in place to assist learners attending placements. These are in place and being used across the school and will apply to any new provision.
- The education provider has also discussed their 'Lecture capture Policy' which is utilised in the school as it is recognised that learners may benefit from access to the discussion and learning that takes place during lectures and seminars. Lecture capture allows learners to revisit content in their own time and at their own pace and will be utilised for the new provision.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None**

### Assessment

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Objectivity –**
  - Objectivity in assessments is an area covered by the education providers academic regulations for taught awards and the school states that they adhere to relevant policies to ensure the objectivity of assessment and the quality of assessment processes. The education provider also has their 'Assessment and Feedback Policy' in place and have also stated that objectivity of assessment is also achieved via the marking and moderation process and external examiner scrutiny. The school has stated that the new provision will meet these requirements and adhere to these policies.
- **Progression and achievement –**
  - The education provider has stated that some of their policies in place for progression and achievement are also covered in their academic regulations for taught awards that the school adheres to and will apply to any new provision.
  - The education provider also has their 'Assessment Misconduct Procedure' and the 'Examination Conduct Regulations' that relate to progression and achievement. These apply to their existing provision and will also apply to any new programmes.
- **Appeals –**
  - The education provider has their learner complaints procedure and their policies on academic appeals in place and applying to their existing provision. The school has also reflected that learners are supported in the school, and should the need arise for a complaint or academic appeal to be considered then these policies are in place and will apply.



**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. The education provider has extensive policies in place and applying to their existing HCPC approved programmes. The education provider and the relevant school the proposed programmes will sit in have detailed these policies and stated that where they will apply to any new provision.

### **Section 3: Programme-level assessment**

#### **Programmes considered through this assessment**

<b>Programme name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession (including modality) / entitlement</b>	<b>Proposed learner number, and frequency</b>	<b>Proposed start date</b>
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and Language Therapy	25, one cohort per year (later advised this will be 34)	04/09/2023
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapy	15, one cohort per year	04/09/2023
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapy	5, one cohort per year	04/09/2023

#### **Stage 2 assessment – education 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 – Entry requirements for the degree apprenticeship programme

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider gave details of the new proposed programmes and the academic pre-requisites that are required for entry onto them. Specifically, they have detailed what qualifications a prospective applicant would need to apply for the proposed HEI-based programmes including a-level and UCAS points. However, we did not find them to have included T-levels in their pre-requisite descriptors, the visitors would have expected to see some mention of this as they are widely recognised and valid qualifications. Additionally, the information seemed to be specifically for the HEI-based programmes and not for the degree-apprenticeship programme.

It is important that we understand what the pre-requisite qualifications are for the proposed degree apprenticeship route to ensure they are proportionate. The information provided thus far does not appear to match the standards of the institute for apprenticeships regarding pre-requisite qualifications and requirements. It is important that this information is easily accessible for prospective learners. We therefore decided to explore this further to clarify the exact entry requirements and required pre-requisites and to ensure this information can be made accessible for learners.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We determined 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 provided further information and narrative regarding the entry requirements on their programmes. They explained that they cannot specify the UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Service) points requirement on their degree apprenticeship as this is determined by the employers the apprentices will be working for. The education provider also agreed to update their entry requirements to include T-levels alongside A-levels as acceptable forms of pre-requisite qualification. The documentary / email exercise did not resolve all of the visitors' questions regarding this standard area as they did not discuss all pre-requisite qualifications / experience that can be utilised. The visitors found the current entry requirements to not match the standards of the institute for apprenticeships. They also were unable to determine what level three qualifications (A / T-levels) were required for the apprenticeship. We therefore looked to explore this further in a second round of quality activity.

**Second quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this by requesting a virtual meeting with the executive, visitors and representatives of the education provider. All parties agreed this would be an appropriate way to explore this as the visitors could pose questions directly to the education provider. This would also not cause further delays in emails / documents being sent to the different parties and waiting for responses.

**Outcomes of second exploration:** The visitors were able to pose their questions to the education provider representatives directly. They were able to highlight their concerns and how they found the wording of the requirements unclear (and how this would be unclear to potential applicants). In particular the visitors discussed how the

wording could be changed to clearly set out the entry requirements. This meant the wording on level 3 requirements was changed as shown below:

- Level 3 or higher qualifications if required and set by the university or relevant experience in lieu of a level 3/high qualification.
- Level 3 qualification or above or relevant experience in lieu of a level 3 / higher qualification.

The visitors found the use of 'if required' could determine that the qualifications are not required. The education provider suggested changing this to 'or above' meaning that higher qualifications can be used. The visitors found this now accurately sets out the entry requirements and meets all the standards. The visitors now have no further concerns and are satisfied with all the entry requirements set by the education provider.

### Quality theme 2 – Ensuring sufficient staff is available and qualified / experienced to run the proposed programmes

**Area for further exploration:** From the education providers descriptions, we found information on the different staff roles that are required. This included information on the different role descriptors for the senior team, programme leader and module leads. However, the information provided also indicated that only the programme leader is currently in place for the physiotherapy programmes. For the speech and language therapy programmes we found evidence of three staff members but were unsure of the total number of proposed learners that would indicate if this number was appropriate. No clear plan for the recruitment of other staff was identified. We wanted to explore this further requesting a break-down of staffing plans to show the staff available and levels of experiences and qualification these staff have. This is important for us to determine that the education provider has sufficient staff in place to run the proposed programme and that these staff have the required knowledge / experience to deliver the programmes. We also requested an onward staffing / recruitment plan to show any future requirement the education provider is considering.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this by requesting an email and additional documentary response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as this allows the education provider to detail their staffing as it stands and a schedule for recruitment. This would provide the details we need to determine sufficient staffing is in place.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider responded to our request for more information with a programme-level response detailing their approach to staffing. We now have details of the staff that are in place and how these staff will be available to support the programme. This includes different staff members having differing levels of specialist knowledge and working on a part time basis. This means for their physiotherapy programme they will have two additional (aside from the programme lead) staff members working on a 0.5 WTE (Whole time equivalent) basis with different specialist knowledge to support the introduction of the programme. The visitors found this to address their concerns and detail the staff that are available. They found the education provider to have demonstrated sufficient

levels of staff being available to support the introduction of the programmes and meet our standards.

### Quality theme 3 – The process for managing responding to feedback received from practice-educators and other stakeholders.

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider has made it clear in their submission that they valued the feedback from practice educators and were keen to use this feedback to improve their programmes. It is unclear how they will manage this feedback, especially if they receive contradictory feedback from their practice educators. It is important that we understand how the education provider plans to receive and respond to this potentially conflicting feedback and how this influences their wider stakeholder / partner management. We therefore decided to explore this further via a quality activity and to better understand the process the education provider has in place for managing their practise educator relationships.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this by requesting an email / additional documentary response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as it allows the education provider the freedom to expand on their existing narrative and to provide documentation examples of this.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider responded with a narrative response which addressed our questions directly. They broke down this response into a 'generic' response that is from the institutional / departmental level before then giving programme specific information. They explained the forums are in place for feedback and faculty leaders meet with healthcare partners via their partnership board. Partnership Relationship Managers also meet locally with healthcare partners and engage in strategic discussions pertinent to the business and working relationship between the school and the partner. At each meeting minutes are agreed, and actions are reviewed.

At the programme levels, there are committee meetings and mechanisms for learners and service users to feed back on. Feedback from all parties are managed through halfway visits to all placement, these meetings are both tripartite and individual. Staff meet fortnightly where feedback from all stakeholders is discussed and action plans are developed.

The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's response, finding this to have directly addressed the questions they have raised. They have detailed how feedback is discussed and that even conflicting feedback can be discussed internally with staff and actions plans developed. The visitors had no further questions or concerns for this area finding the education provider to be meeting all the standards for this area.

## 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.

## 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** –
  - The selection and entry criteria were clear and set at an appropriate level for the degree (HEI-based) programmes. The criteria are set at an appropriate level for an undergraduate programme, including qualifications a-levels and UCAS points being stipulated, English language proficiency being assessed via International English Language Test Systems (IELTS). We found the Programme specifications document to be clear regarding the academic requirements. We did not find specific information in their requirements for T-Level (Technical based qualifications at the same level as A-levels) qualifications at entry. We therefore clarified this with the education provider.
  - We also found the entry requirements for the degree apprenticeship to not be clear. We explored this further in quality theme [one](#). Following this quality activity, the visitors agreed with the new wording and found the standards relating to admissions to be met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - The education provider has systems in place ensure sufficient placements capacity. NHSE had alerted us to placement capacity issues that may affect these proposed programmes. The visitors did consider this in reaching their judgement, but we found this was not an issue against our standards. The education provider submitted details of the placement partnerships they have in place with numbers of places available, others that they are working with to secure placements and those they are beginning to work with who may be able to provide placements going forward.
  - We also examined the education provider levels of staffing and wanted to ensure they had sufficient levels of appropriately qualified / experienced staff in place to run the proposed programmes. We therefore explored this further via quality activity [two](#).
  - Following this quality activity, the visitors found the education provider to have responded to all their questions and had no concerns going forward.
  - We examined the education provider's management and governance structures and found these to be robust to manage the introduction of the new programmes. The programmes will join a roster of existing approved programmes and fit into the existing School of Health Sciences. The education provider previously delivered a speech and language therapy programme in collaboration with another HEI and retain the governance structures from this.

- The education provider has detailed their programme level committee and the meetings that are held at departmental level that will provide leadership for their programmes. They have discussed their partnership board and Partnership Relationship Managers who will form the ongoing collaboration with their placement's providers. The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
  - We found the learning outcomes to be clearly outlined and were satisfied that the education provider has appropriately mapped their curriculum against our standards of proficiency (SOPs)
  - The support visitor determined that overall requirements of learners are carefully considered, and many supportive mechanisms are in place for learners to develop their professional thinking and to discuss any difficulties. Clear plans are in place to include learners within these frameworks. In particular, the delivery of the programme aims to support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.
  - Resources and staffing levels / staff qualifications are appropriate, and well-nested in the education providers ongoing practices. There are mechanisms in place to monitor learner satisfaction and progression, and to encourage dialogue as appropriate.
  - We determined that the programme has been created following the guidance and advice from the relevant professional bodies. The Programmes Learning Outcome's clearly link to the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) Curriculum Guidance and the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Subject-specific benchmark statements. The visitors also found the 'Standing document' to demonstrate how the Programme's development has taken into account the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy's (RCSLT) Curriculum Guidance and will be mapped to RCSLT Curriculum Guidance in the future.
  - The visitors examined how the education provider will ensure that the curricula are kept up to date on the proposed programmes. They noted the system in place to receive regular feedback from practice-educators about the programme in general. What was not clear was how feedback would be managed or what the procedure was to handle contradicting feedback. The visitors also factored in the feedback they received from the support visitor when making their assessment for this area. We therefore explored this area further via quality activity [three](#).
  - Following this quality activity, the visitors found the education provider to have responded to all their questions and have no concerns going forward. The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
  - Practise based learning (PBL) is integral to the programme and clear integration of practise-based learning into the programme has been demonstrated. A plan for the arrangement of academic and clinical placement weeks has been provided as well as a description of block learning. Through this plan, we found the education provider to have demonstrated a robust system in place to manage and organise

placements for their learners. The visitors are satisfied the structure, duration and range of PBL is in place and will support the learning outcomes.

- The education provider has demonstrated they have robust policies in procedures in place to monitor their Practice-based learning sites and partners. They use the Common Practice Assessment Form (CPAF) in line with other Physiotherapy programmes to allow learners to feedback on placements. They have clear processes in place to also monitor their speech and language therapy placements. The education provider has also confirmed the range of placements they have in place with hospitals, primary care education providers and at schools such as the SEN (Special Educational Needs) inclusion service.
- The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
  - The education provider has demonstrated in their module descriptors that they have an assessment strategy in place. It is designed to ensure those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register. Additionally, the education provider has mapped to the relevant professions' associated standards of proficiency and include programme outcomes.
  - We found the education provider has demonstrated how assessments throughout the modules are designed to ensure learners meet the learning outcomes. These are mapped to the required SOPs. Additionally, throughout the programme, learners are assessed and expected to conduct themselves professionally. This cumulates in the assessment of practice during placements and learners practising in a professional manner.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

## Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

### **Referrals to the focused review process**

Ensuring the increased learner numbers are supported and that placements are available.

#### **Area(s) of practice applicable to:**

- Speech and language therapy

#### **Programme(s) applicable to:**

- BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy

**Summary of issue:** We received intelligence indicating that that a member of staff due to help run the new programme has resigned. They also informed us that the programme is oversubscribed with 37 learners due to start the programme instead of the 25 requested in the approval request form.

We clarified this with the education provider who informed us that they have 34 learners planning to engage with the programme. They also informed us that they are recruiting a replacement member of staff and fast tracking this process. They will have sufficient staffing in place to run the new programme by the September intake date.

We reviewed this and have determined it appropriate to investigate this further via a focused review, this will determine if sufficient placements are in place to support the programme going forward.

### **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 programmes should be approved.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out.

### **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 programmes are approved
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out through the focused review process.

### **Reason for this decision:**

- The Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that the programme should receive approval.



- The Panel were concerned about the resignation of a member of staff so close to the start of the programme and the increase in learner numbers and discussed the impact these changes could have on learners.
- The Panel directed the HCPC Executive to closely monitor and assess the risks with these issues through the Focused Review process. The outcome of this review should be presented to the Panel at an appropriate date to enable the issues to be properly investigated with the provider.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner	PT (Part time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner (Degree Apprenticeship)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner (Degree Apprenticeship)	PT (Part time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner (Degree Apprenticeship) (Truro & Penwith College)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner (Degree Apprenticeship) (Truro & Penwith College)	PT (Part time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner (Truro & Penwith College)	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practitioner (Truro & Penwith College)	PT (Part time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/01/2011
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (London)	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2012
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2018