

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Central Lancashire
Name of programme(s)	MSc Speech and Language Therapy, Full time accelerated
Approval visit date	24-25 September 2019
Case reference	CAS-14366-K2K2G4

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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
Calum Delaney	Speech and language therapist
Lucy Myers	Speech and language therapist
Rabie Sultan	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Jane Anthony	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Central Lancashire
Cath Weetman	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Central Lancashire
Mick Cottam	Internal panel member	University of Central Lancashire

Gillian Rudd	Education Representative	Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
Lorna Gamberini	External advisor	Macmillan Principal and Language Therapist

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Speech and Language Therapy
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Speech and language therapist
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02062

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

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	Met learners from the Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy undergraduate programmes
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 09 December 2019.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there will be sufficient physical resources in place to ensure the programme will be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Reason: As per the standards mapping document, the visitors reviewed 'appendix 2 planning consent form' which discussed the development of some physical resources (such as specialist teaching rooms), and the need to acquire some equipment resources (such as specialist equipment and instrumentation). In correspondence before the visit, the programme team had informed the visitors about an existing annual teaching and learning procurement fund and they highlighted that the costs were reasonable. From this, the visitors were unclear about how the funding of the programme worked and could not confirm whether the specialist equipment and instrumentation, including IT software, would be purchased and available for the start of this programme.

It was mentioned at the senior team meeting that there was a commitment and verbal assurance from the Head of School to spend and purchase these resources, but nothing had been actioned or finalised as to how much equipment will be purchased. From further discussion with the programme team, the visitors understood that it was possible no IT software would be available in year one of the programme, meaning it might only be available from the year 2021. The visitors were unable to determine if not having the IT resources will in anyway affect learners from learning or progressing, in or from, year one of the programme. As the visitors were unable to determine how the funding arrangements work and the processes associated with it, they were unclear whether there would be sufficient resources available by the time this programme is proposed to start. Due to this, the visitors were unable to determine whether the programme will be sustainable and fit for purpose. Therefore, the education provider must provide information on the funding arrangement process, highlighting when and what equipment will be available in time for the proposed start date of the programme.

3.9 There must 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 demonstrate the number of adequately qualified and experienced staff in place for the start of the programme, including the subject areas they will be responsible for.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to the course handbook which highlighted two individuals as current full time staff assigned to deliver lectures for this programme. The visitors were also provided with curriculum vitae (CVs) of these staff members and it was clear that these two staff members are registered with the HCPC as a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). Amongst these two named individuals, it was noted that 'one will be the programme leader as well for this programme'. From reviewing 'appendix 1', the visitors noted that the CVs of other staff members are current lecturers from other disciplines, who may provide support to the MSc Speech and Language Therapy programme. However, from the information provided, it was not clear to the visitors which staff members will be part of the programme team and who would be responsible for which aspects of programme.

At the visit, the programme team mentioned a third full time staff member had been recruited recently, who is also registered with the HCPC as a SLT. The programme team confirmed at the meeting that by the time this programme is into the second year, they aim to have a fourth full time HCPC registered SLT lecturer recruited. As there was no information provided regarding the recently recruited lecturer, and regarding the person specification for the fourth lecturer, the visitors could not make a judgement on whether the staff team overall would have the required relevant specialist knowledge and expertise. The visitors could also not determine if three staff members with SLT qualifications, including uncertainty on the roles of other staff, would be sufficient for a cohort of 20 learners in year one and in future years.

Additionally, the programme team also mentioned at the visit that they were open to using either a NHS seconded practitioner as a speech and language therapist lecturer, or existing staff on the physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes. From this information, the visitors were unable to determine how and in what capacity these

individuals would be contributing to the programme. As it was not certain which option the education provider will select, it was not possible to determine what duties the proposed members of staff to be recruited will be carrying out. As such, the visitors were unclear how many staff will be involved in programme and could not determine if there will be enough staff with the relevant expertise and knowledge for this programme.

Therefore, the visitors require further information regarding how many adequately qualified and experienced staff will be in place for the start of the programme, including information about the subject areas they will be delivering.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Reason: In their review of the documentation, the visitors learnt about the 'steering group' which comprises of local stakeholders and representatives from the education provider. Stakeholders comprise of practice managers and clinicians. The education provider also stated that this group had met twice this year with email updates and the purpose of the group was to consider the development of the course. Prior to the visit, the visitors had requested additional information regarding this as they could not see any information regarding the meetings between the practice education providers and the education providers, or plans to have meetings in the future. The education provider responded prior to the visit stating that the programme leader attends the regional 'ProfNet' quarterly meetings. 'ProfNet' is a leadership forum comprised of all the clinical managers of SLT services across the region. However, no further information was provided regarding the 'steering group'.

From discussions with the practice education providers at the visit, the visitors noted there had been communication between the education provider and practice education providers in the development of the programme, but they could not determine what plans were in place to have regular and effective collaboration going forward. As per the requirement for this standard, regular arrangements must be demonstrated where the partnership is reflected on an ongoing relationship, not joint work and co-operation that only happens around the time the programme is approved or being monitored. As such, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates the plan in place to address how they ensure regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an effective process to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: From the review of the initial submission, the visitors noted there have been a few meetings and discussions between the education provider, the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. Further information demonstrated that these discussions were around supporting the development of placement

agreements, ongoing concerns regarding the issue of placements, learners' travel issues and sharing information on the practices adopted by the mentioned education providers in Manchester.

One of the emails provided by the education provider as evidence showed that the current allocation system which determines capacity and demand across the North West region needs to be looked at. This is because more flexibility is required to deal with issues around local learners not having placements within their geographical area. From this information, the visitors were unclear about how the allocation system works. This also raised uncertainty about whether there is availability for the proposed cohort of up to 20 learners and how capacity will be determined for these learners.

During the visit, the practice education providers discussed how they accommodate learners from both education providers in Manchester via a quota allocation system. They stated they expected a similar quota system might be implemented for the proposed programme. The programme team confirmed they expect to do this but they had not finalised the process for doing so.

Therefore the visitors were unclear the education provider had an effective process in place which ensured the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. In particular, the visitors are unclear how the education provider had secured the required amount of practice-based learning for the programme, and how they had considered the regional context. As per the requirement of this standard, the education provider should be able to demonstrate the process of how capacity will be determined for learners across the cohort years. The visitors therefore require the education provider to demonstrate that the effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how learners are made aware of the process to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors noted there were clear safeguarding policies and processes in place. Additionally, the evidence also demonstrated general regulations for learners' conduct, such as disciplinary regulations and procedure. However, the visitors could not see how information highlighting the formal process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users in all settings was made available to learners.

From querying this with the programme team, the visitors heard that learners will be briefed in a session at the start of the programme. As the visitors had not seen any documentary evidence regarding this, they were unable to determine if there was a clear, definitive and formal process of how learners were made aware of this. As per the requirement for this standard, the process must cover all parts of the programme including practice-based learning. The visitors considered that the lack of awareness of a formal policy would make it harder for all learners to understand what constituted acceptable behaviour across different contexts and in different practice-based learning settings. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence demonstrating how learners are

made aware of the process to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

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

4.3 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the programme:

- will ensure learners understand the learning outcomes to be able to meet the standards of proficiency;
- will reflect the knowledge base relevant to speech and language therapists; and
- will integrate theory and practice centrally to the programme.

Reason: The education provider directed visitors to review the programme specification, module descriptors and standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping document as evidence for these standards. From reviewing the evidence, the visitors noted there was insufficient detail regarding the clinical areas presented in the module descriptors. They also noted the SOPs mapping of the module content to the clinical areas was not sufficiently detailed, as it did not demonstrate how the teaching contact time and personal learning hours were allocated across the module content and clinical areas. An example of these is module 'HQ4XX2 Foundational Concepts in Speech and Language Therapy', which was provided as evidence for acquired language disorders and acquired motor speech disorders, which are both major areas of work for speech and language therapists (SLTs). From reviewing module 'HQ4XX2', the visitors noted these major areas were not specifically mentioned in the module content and none of the references in the bibliography related to these areas. The visitors noted similar concerns with other modules where core knowledge was missing. The link to the online reading list provided also did not provide much information regarding the core knowledge and learning outcomes. From this information, the visitors were unclear how the learning outcomes will ensure learners meet the SOPs; reflect the knowledge base relevant to SLTs; and how theory and practice were integrated across the programme. From querying if a more detailed mapping document could be provided prior to the visit, the education provider stated that this will be discussed in more detail at the main event.

From discussions at the visit, the programme team confirmed that as per the university wide policy, they do not develop detailed module descriptors. From further discussions with the programme team, the visitors made it clear that without being able to see details of the core knowledge and learning outcomes, it was not possible to determine how it will be ensured that learners will be able to meet the SOPs. Based on this, it was stated by the programme team and agreed that module descriptors and other relevant documentation needed to be revised, to clearly define the link between the learning outcomes associated with all aspects of this programme.

In light of these conversations, the visitors could not determine whether learners will be able to meet the SOPs for SLTs. As the visitors were unable to identify the learning outcomes, they were unable to establish how the programme reflected the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base of relevant curriculum guidance to ensure the content was relevant to SLTs. Without being able to identify the learning outcomes, it was also not possible for the visitors to determine how learners will be able to apply

knowledge to practice as a basic part of being prepared and competent to practise their profession.

Therefore, the education provider must provide further evidence:

- showing how the learning outcomes ensure learners meet all of the SOPs for the relevant part of the Register;
- showing how the programme reflects the knowledge base of any relevant curriculum guidance; and
- to demonstrate how theory and practice is central to the programme.

4.6 The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

4.7 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate the teaching methods used to deliver the programme, and demonstrate how these are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes. The evidence must also demonstrate how evidence-based practice and autonomous and reflective thinking will be supported by the programme

Reason: The education provider had provided the module descriptors, programme specification and course handbook as evidence for these standards. From reviewing the evidence, the visitors noted that all module descriptors stated 'learning and teaching will be offered using a blended learning model, with integrated online, classroom and clinical learning opportunities'. As this was generically mentioned across all module descriptors, the visitors were unclear about what specific learning and teaching methods would be applied for each module, how these will be accessible to all learners on the programme and how these will be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

As stated in the condition above for standards 4.1, 4.3 and 4.5, the education provider will be providing further evidence which demonstrates how the programme ensures the learning outcomes are met. Due to this and with no further information around the learning and teaching methods used to deliver the programme and support learner needs, the visitors were unable to make a judgement. Therefore, they were unclear about the teaching methods used to support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking. In addition, they were unclear how the learning, teaching and assessment methods helped to support and develop evidence-based practise.

The education provider must provide further information about the learning and teaching methods specific to each module, including referencing these to the relevant learning outcomes. The evidence must also demonstrate how this will help learners to become autonomous and reflective practitioners, and how will it help learners to inform and systematically evaluate their practice as part of evidence-based practice. This way, the visitors will be able to determine if these standards have been met.

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 learners will be able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: In their review of the course handbook on page 20 under section 3.1 'inter-professional' paragraph, the visitors noted that inter-professional learning (IPL) will involve sessions for learners to work in several learning workshops. This will involve a range of topics to explore such as teamwork and communication. The visitors were not clear what IPL learning and teaching opportunities will be involved, and what professions will be involved in this. From querying this prior to the visit, the education provider responded that the first semester will involve learners undertaking joint team building events along with physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The education provider also mentioned the plans in place to combine research training across the three disciplines and lectures are being planned which will involve these three disciplines. The reason visitors were still not clear about IPL is because the information provided gave the impression that these are still in the planning stages, and therefore the visitors were unsure how exactly these joint team building events and combining research sessions would be delivered.

Additionally at the visit, the education provider also mentioned about currently having discussions with the School of Nursing to design IPL experiences for learners, which will involve particular case based workshops with nurses and health visitors. The visitors noted the education provider's intention of providing IPL opportunities to learners, but could not see any finalised formal plans demonstrating how and what learning will take place.

The visitors were particularly not clear how IPL will take place in the above mentioned joint building events along with what proposals will be finalised with the School of Nursing. Therefore, the visitors could not judge how learners could learn with and from other professionals and learners from relevant professions. Therefore the education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions on these programmes.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the formal processes to obtain consent from learners when they participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching and for managing situations when learners decline from participating.

Reason: The visitors were directed to view the 'conduct and professional behaviour' section in the course handbook, as evidence for this standard. From reviewing the evidence, the visitors noted learners are required to engage in practical demonstrations and it is expected they understand the implications of this requirement. On the commencement of the programme, learners are expected to sign a document which highlights they have understood the requirements and implications of the course. The visitors could not see any information elaborating on the possible implications of the learners' giving consent, and for the learners who did not give consent. The web link also provided as evidence outlined generic information regarding the 'life on campus student support.'

The education provider also referenced pages 26-30 of 'appendix 10 SLT Work based Learning Assessment Handbook' as evidence for this standard. From reviewing this, the

visitors noted this constitutes a form addressing the performance and assessment criteria of the practical demonstrations. The visitors were unable to see any information in this document about how consent is obtained from learners acting as service users and carers. It was also not clear to the visitors how explicit consent was obtained from learners who do not wish to participate, what the consequences were for them if they withdrew, how this was communicated to them and what form was used. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate the effective processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from learners in order for the visitors to make a judgement as to whether this standard is met.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

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 that there is a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring learner identified practice-based learning to ensure it is safe and supportive for learners and service users. .

Reason: As per the standards mapping document, the education provider stated that all practice-based learning is audited by 'North West Learning Audit Documents', whilst reviews take place on a 2 yearly basis using the same documents. North West Learning Audit Documents is a joint partnership agreement method between the education provider and practice education providers, to monitor the quality of practice-based learning. Additionally, the 'work based learning website link' provided as evidence provided information regarding quality assurance procedures. The visitors were clear about the processes in place to ensure the quality of practice-based learning, including how they are safe and supportive, for those practice education provider within the North West Learning Audit Documents.

However, from reviewing the course handbook, the visitors noted that in the second year, in semester 2, learners are required to identify a total of ten days of practice-based learning equivalent to a total of 70 hours, in areas associated with SLT. The visitors learnt that this practice-based learning may not be at a practice education provider already audited by the education provider through the North West Learning Audit Documents process. It was also mentioned that visiting tutors carry out visits to learners on placement to allow informal evaluation of placement quality, but it was not explicitly clear if this involved the learner identified practice-based learning settings. Therefore the visitors were unable to see evidence of a clear, thorough and effective system used by the education provider, to ensure the quality of learner identified practice-based learning environments.

In addition, the visitors were unsure how the education provider will ensure beforehand whether such learner identified practice-based learning is safe and supportive for learners and service users. As such the visitors require further clarity around the system used to approve and ensure the quality of all learner identified practice-based learning, and how it is ensured that it is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved 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 that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.

Reason: The evidence mapped for these standards mentioned Practice Education Facilitators (PEFs) being responsible for updating the programme team with information about the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at their practice education provider. However, the visitors could not see any information in the documentation regarding what experience and qualifications the practice educators must possess, for their role. The evidence spoke about how placement auditing takes place, but the visitors were unable to see information on how the education provider used the information provided by the PEFs to ensure that there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning for the proposed programme. From querying this prior to the visit, the education provider responded that the practice educators will depend on the number of learners and the type of placements.

At the visit, the visitors met practice education providers who will possibly take learners from the proposed programme and who already have a pool of practice educators who facilitate various HCPC approved programmes currently offered by the education provider. However, it remained unclear to the visitors how many practice educators will be involved and be a part of this proposed programme. At the visit, the visitors also queried with the programme team how they ensured there were enough practice educators, with relevant knowledge and skills, for the proposed programme. The programme team stated that they carry out an audit every 18 months with their practice-based learning partners to ensure this. However, without more information regarding this audit, the visitors were unclear whether there will be sufficient practice educator's at all practice-based learning settings, and how their knowledge, skills and experience was determined by the education provider. Due to this, the visitors could not determine what the staffing numbers and their relevant experience in SLT supervised placements for the programme will be, including the learner identified placements in the second semester in year two.

Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which clearly outlines the process used by the education provider to ensure that there is an adequate number of qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning for this programme. In addition, the visitors require further information about how the education provider ensures practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning. The evidence must also demonstrate information about what the expectations will be in terms of staff numbers and their relevant experience in SLT supervised placements and the learner identified placements.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the assessment strategy and design ensures those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors noted the module descriptors and programme specification provided as evidence for this standard. From reviewing the programme specification, the visitors noted the different assessment methods that will be used for this programme. In their review of the module descriptors, the visitors were unable to determine the module specific aims and learning outcomes as most of the module descriptors stated 'learning and teaching will be offered using a blended learning model, with integrated online, classroom and clinical learning opportunities'. Additionally, the visitors also noted there was profession related core knowledge such as acquired language disorders and motor speech disorders missing from some of the modules. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how the assessment strategy and design ensured that learners were able to meet all the standards of proficiency. Due to this, they were unclear how learners, who complete the programme, will be able to demonstrate the level of knowledge, skills and understanding to practise their profession safely and effectively.

As noted in the condition for standard 4.1, the visitors discussed the issues of core knowledge and learning outcomes being unclear in the module descriptors. It was discussed at the programme team meeting that the education provider will be updating and revising the module descriptors with detailed reference to the learning outcomes and assessments. As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures that learners meet all the SOPs before completing the programme.

6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show that the assessments policies clearly specify the requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Reason: From reviewing section 5.1 of the course handbook as evidence for this standard, the visitors noted that it was clear that learners should pass all modules in the first year to be able to progress onto year two. However, the evidence also stated that if a learner fails at their second attempt, they are required to step off the programme. The next step in the process involves the course leader discussing with learners the option of retaking the module the following year, or the possibility of leaving the programme with an exit award. In addition, the visitors were unable to locate information which outlined the resit policies for this programme and the maximum amount of attempts a learner can take even if they retaking modules after two failed attempts.

From reviewing these statements in the evidence provided, the visitors were unclear if learners can definitely progress if they fail modules at the end of the first year and whether the option of retaking modules in the second year is something the learners can choose. Additionally, the visitors could also not determine what happens to learners' progression should they fail modules in year two of the programme and how many attempts are they allowed. Therefore the visitors require further information which demonstrates the clear requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment methods are appropriate and effective in measuring the learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors were directed to view the module descriptors, programme specification and SOPs mapping document for this standard. From reviewing the module descriptors, the visitors were unable to determine what module specific learning and teaching methods were used to measure the specific learning outcomes. This is because all the module descriptors mentioned the same statement 'learning and teaching will be offered using a blended learning model, with integrated online, classroom and clinical learning opportunities'. Due to this, the visitors were unclear how the assessment methods mentioned in each module descriptor will help in measuring the learning outcomes and meeting the relevant SOPs.

As mentioned under conditions 4.1 and 6.1, it was discussed at the programme team meeting that the education provider will be revising the module descriptors to include more specific and detailed learning outcomes explicitly linked to the relevant SOPs and assessment methods. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how the assessment methods used will confirm that learners who complete the programme can practise safely and effectively in their profession. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to show the assessment methods used to measure the learning outcomes and how they are appropriate and effective at measuring the learning outcomes to ensure that the SOPs can be met. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Coventry University
Name of programme(s)	MSc Occupational Therapy, Full time
Approval visit date	08-09 October 2019
Case reference	CAS-14816-L1C4R1

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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:

Diane Whitlock	Lay
Claire Brewis	Occupational therapist
Joanna Goodwin	Occupational therapist
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.

Paul Cashian	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Coventry University
Geovanna Mora Molina	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Coventry University
Caroline Grant	Education Officer	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Georgina Callister	Visitor	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Alison Hampson	Visitor	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

In the same week as this visit, a second HCPC panel considered the approval of another proposed new programme at Coventry University, the MSc Physiotherapy and Leadership.

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
Proposed first intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 25
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02109

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	Comments
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes	
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes	
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes	
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes	
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes	

Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes	
Internal quality monitoring documentation	No	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

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

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

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 06 December 2019.

6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that assessment in practice-based learning does not make unfair demands on learners

without previous experience, and that all learners are able to understand the requirements for progression through different levels of understanding and skill.

Reason: From their review of the evidence submitted regarding assessment and practice-based learning, the visitors were aware that learners would be expected to meet Master's level standards in the first assessment in the first placement. As this is a pre-registration Master's programme, learners may have relatively limited prior experience of the expectations and demands of the practical elements of a health professional programme. The visitors therefore considered that:

- Expecting learners to achieve at the Master's level straight away may not provide a fair and reliable measure of learners' achievement; and
- It might not be clear to learners how the progression of assessment would work within the programme, reflecting the development and deepening of their understanding and abilities.

The visitors therefore require further evidence that the education provider can ensure that learners' achievement in practice-based learning is measured in a fair and reliable way, reflecting the fact that their knowledge and skills will develop and improve through the placements and through the programme, and that it is clear to learners what is expected of them.

6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all assessments in the practice-based learning modules are appropriate to Master's level learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors noted from their review of programme documentation that there was a disparity between the learning outcomes, which were set at Master's level, and some of the assessment methods used in the practice-based learning modules, which they considered did not always reach M-level. For example, in Occupational Therapy in Practice 1 the summative assessment takes the form of a portfolio. It was not clear to the visitors how this differed from the portfolio required from learners on the undergraduate programme, and so they could not be clear that it was an appropriate way of measuring M-level learning outcomes. They therefore require the education provider to show how they will ensure that all the assessment methods used on the programme are appropriate to measure M-level learning outcomes.

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Exeter
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging, Work based learning
Approval visit date	19 – 20 November 2019
Case reference	CAS-14878-H9Y7Y2

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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:

Shaaron Pratt	Radiographer - Diagnostic radiographer
Ian Hughes	Lay
Helen Best	Radiographer - Diagnostic radiographer
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive
Naomi Oldenburg	CORU (observer)

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.

Catherine Gallup	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Exeter University
Charles Sloane	Reviewer	Society of Radiographers

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging
Mode of study	WBL (Work based learning)
Profession	Radiographer
Modality	Diagnostic radiographer
Proposed first intake	01 March 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02126

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	Comments
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes	
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes	
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes	
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes	
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes	
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes	
Internal quality monitoring documentation	No	The programme is new, and so internal monitoring data is not available.

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below,

we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

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

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 10 January 2020.

- 2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.**
- 2.4 The admissions process must assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.**
- 2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.**

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider should clarify who will be responsible for organising and funding DBS and occupational health checks, and how they will ensure that this information is communicated to applicants.

Reason: From their review of programme documentation, the visitors were aware that ownership of the admissions process rested largely with employers, who will be responsible for identifying likely suitable candidates. The education provider will enter into a contract with employers, which will clarify the different responsibilities of each

party. A draft copy of this contract was supplied in evidence. The visitors were not clear from their review of this contract who would have responsibility for carrying out Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks, and occupational health checks, and they were not clear how, and at what stage of the admissions process, this information would be communicated to applicants. They therefore require further evidence clarifying who will have responsibility for ensuring that applicants have DBS and occupational health checks, and how this will be made clear to applicants.

3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.

3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the policies in place at employer partners, relating to the areas below, are appropriate.

- Wellbeing and learning support;
- Learner complaints;
- Assessment of learners' conduct, character and health; and
- Raising concerns

Reason: The visitors understood from their review of programme documentation that, for matters arising in practice-based learning, the education provider planned to rely on employers' processes. The visitors considered that this was reasonable, given the structure of the degree apprenticeship, in which learners spend the majority of their time in the employer setting. However, they were not clear from the evidence submitted how the education provider would ensure that the processes in place at the various partner employers were appropriate, and how they would be able to exercise appropriate oversight over them. This was discussed with the programme team at the visit, and verbal assurances were given that they had good relationships with their employer partners and were not concerned about how well such policies would work. However, the visitors were not able to see evidence to help them understand how the education provider determines whether each policy is appropriate, and so were unable to be certain that the standards were met. They therefore require further evidence demonstrating how the education provider will ensure appropriate processes are in place.

3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure that they are aware of the decisions made by employer partners in relation to the ongoing suitability of specific learners.

Reason: The visitors understood from their review of programme documentation that, for matters arising in practice-based learning that would affect ongoing suitability of a learner, the education provider planned to rely on employers' processes. The visitors considered that this was reasonable, given the structure of the degree apprenticeship, in which learners spend the majority of their time in the employer setting. However, they were not clear from the evidence submitted how the education provider would ensure that they were kept fully abreast of decisions made in specific cases. They noted that the education provider needed to be able to make a decision about whether learners would be fit to practise in future, and that any issues arising during the programme would be relevant to this. They were aware from the documentation that there were tripartite meetings between education provider, employer and learner, but these took place infrequently – only three or four per year – and so might not be suitable for informing the education provider of more urgent issues.

They were therefore not able to determine whether the standard was met. The programme team gave assurances that there would not be problems in keeping in touch with partners in this way but the visitors were not clear about the formal process for maintaining these lines of communication. They therefore require further evidence demonstrating how they will ensure that they are kept informed of any decisions made about individual learners.

3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.

3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all learners understand what policies and processes apply to them in particular contexts, and what support is available from them.

Reason: The visitors understood from their review of programme documentation that, for matters arising in practice-based learning, the education provider planned to rely on employers' processes. The visitors considered that this was reasonable, given the structure of the degree apprenticeship, in which learners spend the majority of their time in the employer setting. The visitors were satisfied that learners would be able to understand what policies applied to them in the academic setting at the education provider. However, they could not see evidence explaining where learners would be able to access information about processes in the practice / employment environment. In discussions at the visit the education provider gave verbal assurances that learners would have access to this information and would be able to discuss any issues with

their link tutor, but the visitors were not able to see clear evidence of how this information, and the expectations around it relating to matters such as escalation, would be made readily available to learners. They were therefore unable to determine that the standards were met, and require further evidence demonstrating how learners will be given full information about what policies applied in what settings, and what support was available.

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

4.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider making more explicit reference to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) in the parts of the curriculum where the content of the SCPEs is delivered.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that these standards were met at threshold level, because the learning outcomes and the approach to assessment both incorporated the SCPEs and would ensure that learners both understood them and would have to demonstrate that they were able to meet them. However, they did note that although the content of the SCPEs was delivered, the SCPEs themselves were not always named and referred to. This might create a risk in future that the learners did not fully understand the place of the SCPEs in their practice. The visitors therefore suggest that wherever necessary SCPE-related content was explicitly linked to the SCPEs.

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](#).

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Reading
Name of programme(s)	PGCert Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals, Part time PGCert Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals, Part time
Approval visit date	30 October 2019
Case reference	CAS-14804-Y0X5B2

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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 for prescribing (for education providers) (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:

Manoj Mistry	Lay
James Pickard	Independent prescriber
Alaster Rutherford	Independent prescriber
John Archibald	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.

Matthew Almond	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Reading
Eve Davey	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Reading

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	PGCert Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Entitlement	Independent prescribing
Proposed first intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50 across both programmes
Intakes per year	3
Assessment reference	APP02106

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.

Programme name	PGCert Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Entitlement	Supplementary prescribing
Proposed first intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50 across both programmes
Intakes per year	3
Assessment reference	APP02107

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

Internal quality monitoring documentation	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 the programmes are not approved, we met two nurses and a pharmacist who had successfully completed the nursing and pharmacist independent prescribing programmes.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Not Required	We did not meet with service users and carers as the panel did not have any issues to explore with them.
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 11 December 2019.

C.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour in prescribing practice, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

E.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how learners are able to understand and how assessments throughout the programme ensure learners are able to meet the expectation of professional behaviour in prescribing practice, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs).

Reason: From a review of the documentation to meet this standard, it was noted the education provider said that throughout the programme emphasis is put on professional practice and upholding the standards of the professional regulator. The visitors were made aware the programme handbook stated that as registered healthcare professionals, learners are expected to maintain behaviours associated with their professional code of conduct, including the SCPEs. However, the visitors could not see references to the SCPEs in the learning outcomes, nor in details of the assessments on the programmes. The visitors were therefore unable to determine how the education provider ensures the SCPEs are outlined across modules on the programme explicitly through the learning outcomes, and how they are assessed so learners are able to demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour in prescribing practice. The visitors require further evidence which shows the learning outcomes being explicitly linked to the SCPEs across modules on the programme and how assessment of the expectations of professional behaviour in prescribing practice, including the SCPEs, are carried out at appropriate points through the programme.

D.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 provide further evidence to show that the training they offer practice educators is mandatory, and how they ensure that practice educators complete the training.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware practice educators are able to access information on what the role entails. They are sent the handbook which explains the role, the learning outcomes and the support learners need. They are also offered training from the education provider for their role as practice educators at the start of each cohort. During the facilities and resources presentation, the visitors were informed training for practice educators is mandatory. However, in the meeting with practice educators, they told the visitors they had not received any training for the role. The visitors were also informed the programme does not have a mechanism to record who has completed the training. The visitors were unsure whether it is mandatory for practice educators to complete training so they are adequately prepared to support learning and assess learners effectively. The visitors could also not see how the programme determines which practice educators have completed the training and those who have not. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show how whether the training offered by the education provider is mandatory, and how the education provider ensures that practice educators complete the training.

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Southampton
Name of programme(s)	MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration), Full time accelerated
Approval visit date	08 - 09 October 2019
Case reference	CAS-14821-S3P8M3

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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:

Patricia McClure	Occupational therapist
Jennifer Caldwell	Occupational therapist
Mohammed Jeewa	Lay
Patrick Armsby	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.

Julie Cullen	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Southampton – Head of Nursing, Midwifery and Health
Matt Smith	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Southampton – Senior Administrative officer, Curriculum and Quality Assurance, Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 January 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 15
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02113

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	Comments
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes	
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes	
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes	
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes	
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes	
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes	
Internal quality monitoring documentation	Not Required	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below,

we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

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

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 20 November 2019.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that they have a process in place for obtaining consent from learners and service users where appropriate.

Reason: To evidence this standard prior to the visit, the education provider indicated that as service users were members of the Expert by Experience (EbE) group consent is implicit. The education provider did not disclose how they obtain consent from learners. From this information, the visitors could not confirm there was an effective process in place to obtain consent from service users and learners. At the visit, the visitors enquired about the consent process that is used for service users and learners during practical sessions and teaching. In meetings with learners and the programme team, it was confirmed that learners could opt out of activities, and the teaching team would take into account factors such as cultural differences and physical or mental health, if it was brought up by learners. However, they also confirmed that consent was assumed for learners taking part in the programme. The visitors considered that one cannot assume consent for a learner and the education provider should ensure all learners have consented before specific activities such as manual handling of other learners. Consent for service users was formally taken when practical sessions were

being recorded by film or photograph, however the consent was focused around the use of the footage rather than the service user being involved in the activity. Therefore, the education provider must show how the programme includes an effective process for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners, in order to respect individual's rights and reduce the risk of harm.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must clarify what the attendance monitoring processes are and how this will be communicated to learners.

Reason: To evidence this standard prior to the visit, the education provider stated that attendance for all of the programme is mandatory and attendance is monitored by personal tutors and the programme lead. The visitors queried how this mechanism would work in practice during the running of the programme and how attendance was recorded for learners. The programme team and learners confirmed that currently a register was only taken occasionally and rationalised this by stating that teaching staff could recognise learner absence due to small cohort sizes. However, the visitors considered this approach to be subjective and based on relationships rather than having a factual, objective record of learners' attendance in the programme. Furthermore, with the MSc adding additional learners this system of recognising absence would not be as effective. The education provider must show that there are relevant monitoring processes in place to ensure that learners are taking part in all essential parts of the programme.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

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

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must clarify how they maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning, and how this system ensures that the practice environment is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

Reason: To evidence this standard prior to the visit, the education provider indicated that all placements are audited as part of the Education Provider Agreement (EPA) and provided an example placement audit form. At the visit, the visitors questioned the practice educators about how the audits worked in practice and how effective they have been. Two of the practice educators indicated there had been a learning environment audit for their place of work, however two other practice educators indicated that their placement sites had not been audited by the education provider. This information contradicts the visitors' understanding that the education provider has audited all practice-based learning environments. As the visitors cannot be certain that the education provider has audited all practice-based learning environments, they were also

unsure how the education provider was ensuring the quality, safety and support for learners and service users at each placement site.

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

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

Recommendation: The education provider should explore other opportunities for how learners are learning with and from other learners throughout the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that there were examples of interprofessional learning where learners can learn with and from others and therefore this standard was met at threshold level. However, the visitors noted that the activities that allowed learners to learn from other learners are not as developed as the opportunities to learn alongside other learners. Therefore, the visitors recommend that the programme continues to ensure learners benefit from interprofessional learning by developing opportunities for learners to learn from one another throughout the length of the programme.