

HCPC major change process report

Education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Full time BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice, Full time
Date submission received	02 July 2020
Case reference	CAS-16145-X1B6R5

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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 major change process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programmes 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).

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process report. 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:

Anthony Hoswell	Paramedic
Gordon Pollard	Paramedic
John Archibald	HCPC executive

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2014
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	MC04660

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2020

Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	MC04682

We undertook this assessment to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards, following changes reported to us via the major change process. The following is an overview of the changes from the information received via this process.

The education provider propose to run a degree apprenticeship programme, the new award of BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice. This will involve changes across most areas of our Standards of Education and Training (SETs).

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Major change notification form	Yes
Completed major change standards mapping	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission, the visitors were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that our standards continued to be met at this time, and therefore require further evidence as noted below.

Further evidence required

In order to determine whether the standards continue to be met, the visitors require further evidence for the following standards for the reasons noted below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programme(s), and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the standards.

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.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the visitors were informed the webpage for the programme was being processed. The visitors were also made aware learners needed to have an Emergency Response Driving qualification. The visitors were unclear from the information to applicants what support is given to a learner who may become disqualified from driving while on the apprentice programme. The visitors were therefore

not clear what information was available for applicants so applicants are able to come to an appropriate decision about their suitability for the programme. The visitors require further evidence about the information which is to be available for applicants so they are able to make a fully informed decision about taking up a place on the programme.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further evidence about the information, such as a weblink or draft text of the information which is going to be on the webpage, which is to be available for applicants so they are able to make a fully informed decision about taking up a place on the programme.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear about how many learners were going to be recruited onto the new BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice programme. The visitors were made aware of a meeting with SWAST which discussed learner numbers, however the total number of students remains unclear. The visitors were also unsure whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group. The visitors were also unsure how the programme will be funded and what costs were likely to be incurred in its operation. The visitors were also unclear of the structure or governance of the programme, given the input of the employer in degree apprenticeships. The visitors therefore could not determine whether the programme is secure and supported by all stakeholders involved. The visitors therefore need further information about the learner numbers to the programme. The visitors need information whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further information about the learner numbers to the programme and whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group, and any other relevant information to demonstrate the programme is secure, supported and that there is a future for the programme.

3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Reason: From the documentation provided to meet this standard, the visitors were made aware of evidence relating to the assessment of learners through tripartite meetings. However, the visitors did not receive any information to demonstrate how the programme would be monitored, given the changes to accommodate the apprenticeship programme. The visitors therefore need to see further evidence of the systems which are in place to monitor and evaluate the programme's quality and effectiveness.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further evidence of the systems which are in place to monitor and evaluate the programme's quality and effectiveness.

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

Reason: To meet this standard, the visitors were informed that apprentices will be supported to attend a range of practice-based learning environments. The visitors were

also informed there were a series of channels of communication such as regular meetings, emails and regular phone calls between the education provider and staff within Trusts. However, the education provider did not specify in which document information to evidence the changes can be found. Therefore, the visitors could not be sure how the education provider and practice education providers work in partnership makes sure it provides ongoing quality and effectiveness.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide evidence of how they work in partnership with practice education providers to ensure it provides ongoing quality and effectiveness.

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

Reason: To meet this standard, the visitors were informed the education provider works closely with practice partners. This takes place at operational and strategic levels through a range of meetings and mentor days such as Professional Placement Strategy Group meetings. Placement capacity meetings are held every six weeks to review and discuss the number and range of appropriate placements needed and available. The visitors were made aware there was a paramedic allocation officer who liaises with the ambulance placement partner NHS Trust and that the practice placement coordinator reviews placement allocation at the start of each academic year. The visitors were also informed the paramedic allocation officer sources non-ambulance placements. The overall practice assessment document is monitored for each apprentice to ensure that they have had the required range of practice areas during the programme. However, the education provider did not specify in which document information to evidence the changes can be found. Therefore, the visitors could not be sure how the education provider's processes make sure all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further information which demonstrates how their processes make sure all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

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

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear about how many learners were going to be recruited onto the new BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice programme. The visitors were made aware of a meeting with SWAST which discussed learner numbers, however the total number of students remains unclear. The visitors were also unsure whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group. The visitors were therefore unable to determine whether or not there was an appropriate number of staff who are able and equipped to deliver the programme effectively. The visitors need further information about the learner numbers to the programme and whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further information about the learner numbers to the programme and whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the

existing learner group, and any other relevant information to demonstrate the resources provided for the programme allow for an appropriate number of staff who are able and equipped to deliver the programme effectively.

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.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear about how many learners were going to be recruited onto the new BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice programme. The visitors were made aware of a meeting with SWAST which discussed learner numbers, however the total number of students remains unclear. The visitors were also unsure whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group. The visitors therefore were unclear whether programme resources were readily available to learners and educators.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further information about the learner numbers to the programme and whether there will be any increase in learners numbers overall, or whether there will be apprentices studying alongside the existing learner group, and any other information to demonstrate programme resources in all settings are readily available to learners and educators and are used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

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

Reason: The visitors were informed learners were given a range of different methods to support their wellbeing and learning needs such as student advisors and study skills advisors. However the visitors could find information about 24-hour support from the education provider if a problem occurs out of hours. The visitors therefore need further information about how the education provider provides support to learners out of hours while in the academic setting.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further information of how out of hours support is provided to learners while in the academic setting.

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.

Reason: The visitors were made aware that the programme handbook stated 100% attendance is required for practice-based learning and hours at the academic setting. However, the visitors could not find evidence of how learners make up lost hours while in the academic setting. Therefore, the visitors were unsure of the systems in place to take appropriate action if learners fail to attend the compulsory parts of the programme. The visitors need to see evidence of how learners are able to make up missed hours in the academic setting.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further evidence of how learners are able to make up missed hours in the academic setting.

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.

Reason: From the documentation the visitors were unable to determine how the assessment strategy relates to the apprenticeship model. The visitors were unclear whether or not the education provider was undertaking both assessment and teaching in the proposed apprenticeship programme. Therefore the visitors are unable to make a judgement as to how the assessment design and strategy ensures that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs). The visitors need further information about how assessments will be carried out in the apprenticeship programme to ensure learners can meet all of the SOPs before completing the programme.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further evidence of how assessments will be carried out in the apprenticeship programme to ensure learners can meet all of the SOPs before completing the programme.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

Recommendation of the visitors – approval visit required

The education provider responded to the request for further evidence set out in section 4. Following their consideration of this response, the visitors were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that the following standards continue to be met, for the reason(s) detailed below.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Reason: As a response to the request for further information, the visitors were signposted to notes from meetings with SWAST in October and December 2019. From October 2019, the visitors noted that this showed that a different education provider was preferred for the tender and that the education provider's tender was not preferred. From the December 2019 minutes, the visitors noted they did not refer to who was present at the meeting or what agreed outcomes or decisions were made.

In addition, the visitors saw evidence related to the apprenticeship levy. However, they noted this evidence to be general information about the levy and did not provide any evidence relating to the future of this specific programme. The visitors were also unclear about the financial investment into the programme. Although within the 'Strategy 2030' document and the web links provided, the visitors did see evidence relating to the education provider's commitment to apprenticeships in general, the visitors considered this provided no firm evidence relating to this programme in particular. The visitors noted they had seen evidence of the education provider's intention to run the programme, however, they had not seen further information of the commitment to deliver it.

The visitors therefore considered there was no evidence to show that the programme is secure, supported and that there is a future for the programme. The approval process will require a documentary submission and review, and meetings with various stakeholders in the programme. Therefore, a visit is the most appropriate process to gather evidence to ensure the programme continues to meet this standard.

3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Reason: As the response to the request for further information, the visitors were signposted to a webpage. The visitors saw that it refers to the approval processes for new programmes under the 'enhancement framework (phase one)'. However, the visitors could not identify evidence demonstrating how this process has been applied to the development of the proposed programme. The visitors were therefore unable to satisfy themselves that the programme has been developed in accordance with the university's own internal processes for new programme development.

Similarly, the visitors could not see evidence relating to phases two and three of the 'enhancement framework'. The visitors therefore were unclear of this specific programme's adherence to the education provider's own processes for monitoring.

The visitors considered that the evidence was appropriate to the undergraduate degree programme. However, the evidence did not refer to in any way the specific and different structure and partnership model of the apprenticeship framework. The visitors were therefore unclear how effective the framework is to the degree apprenticeship model.

The visitors were therefore unclear how the programme delivers overall quality and effectiveness on an ongoing basis. The approval process will require a documentary submission and review, and meetings with various stakeholders in the programme. Therefore, a visit is the most appropriate process to gather evidence to ensure the programme continues to meet this standard.

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

Reason: As further evidence in response to the visitors request for further information, the visitors were provided with documentation outlining processes relating to the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for the currently approved programme. The visitors considered there was no evidence to demonstrate how current capacity is potentially expandable. The visitors considered that the documentation does not evidence how the availability and capacity of practice-based learning is assured for the proposed increase in learner numbers relating to the proposed new programme.

The visitors were referred to a document titled 'Workplace Agreement April 2019'. However, the visitors noted that it is unsigned and makes no specific reference to any particular practice-based learning provider. Furthermore, the same document does not indicate how capacity is assured. It also refers to learner numbers being agreed in a separate document or documents referred to as 'Definitive Document'. The visitors did not receive the Definitive document. The visitors were therefore unable to determine from this the process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning.

In addition, the visitors considered the document 'ARC Placement on the web (POW) System guide Academic Year 20/21' which provided evidence of a system of recording and monitoring placement allocations on an individual student basis. However, as this was a mechanism to log where learners were attending placement, the visitors

considered it did not in and of itself constitute a process to evidence of capacity and availability in the overall system.

The visitors were also made aware of evidence which demonstrated concerns relating to placement capacity within the currently approved programme. For example, 'Minutes AHP SEG 14.07.2020' refers to difficulty in placing paramedic learners because of COVID-19 and the increased number of learners. Also, the 'PPSG Minutes 17.01.2020' refers to the existing programme trying to be more creative to ensure sufficient hospital placements to support year two learners. The visitors recognised that the programme team regularly meet and discuss practice-based learning with their partners. However, they were unclear about what happens when there is limited or no availability and how the education provider ensures its process for the new programme are effective.

Across the additional evidence submitted, the visitors considered there was a lack of evidence to demonstrate the process to ensure learner numbers can be accommodated. The visitors therefore are not satisfied there are effective processes in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

The approval process will require a documentary submission and review, and meetings with various stakeholders in the programme. Therefore, a visit is the most appropriate process to gather evidence to ensure the programme continues to meet this standard.

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.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the additional documentation to meet this standard and noted the purchase of 10 additional ophthalmoscopes and two catheterisation training sets within a spreadsheet entitled 'AHP Approved Equipment Requests Feb 2020'. The visitors were unsure of the purpose of this specific equipment and considered it to not be relevant to the needs of a pre-registration paramedic programme. They considered this equipment may be relevant for post-registration skills. From this document, the visitors were unable to clearly see details of any additional equipment purchased or to be purchased specifically for the new programme.

The visitors were informed that 'the need for additional equipment will be bid for at the next round in September 2020'. The visitors considered that although a bid had been made, this was no guarantee that it would be accepted nor what would be bid for as part of the next round to ensure the resources were used effectively to support the required teaching and learning on the new programme.

As such, the visitors were unclear whether the existing resources was sufficient to provide an appropriate level of support the new programme (as well as the existing programme) and so they were therefore unsure whether the programme resources were readily available to learners and educators. The approval process will require a documentary submission and review, and meetings with various stakeholders in the programme. Therefore, a visit is the most appropriate process to gather evidence to ensure the programme continues to meet this standard.

Section 6: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the request for further evidence set out in section 4, the visitors are not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the standards continue to be met for the reason(s) noted in section 5, and recommend that an approval visit is undertaken to consider the approval of the programme(s).

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 12 November 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](#).