

## Approval process quality report

Education provider	Boots Hearingcare
Name of programme(s)	Boots HearingCare Qualification in Hearing Aid Dispensing
Date Assessment commenced	17 March 2021
Visitor recommendation made	13 August 2021
Case reference	CAS-01048-N4R9G0

### Summary of findings from this assessment

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that

- Boots Hearingcare meets institution-level standards of education and training
- the Boots HearingCare Qualification in Hearing Aid Dispensing programme meets programme level standards of education and training

The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding approval and next steps.

The recommended visitor outcomes of this process were as follows:

- The provider met institution-level standards through visitor-led stage 1 assessment, meaning the institution is properly organised to deliver HCPC-approved education and training
- The programme should be approved as all programme level standards were met through stage 2 assessment
- The institution should next be engaged with the performance review process in two years (2022-23 academic year)

The Education and Training Committee will now meet to consider the visitors recommendations and make a decision regarding institution and programme approval, and next steps.

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## Section 1: Background information

### **Who we are**

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.

### **Our standards**

We approve institutions and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our standards are divided into two levels based on their relevance to the institution and programme(s). The following considerations were made when splitting standards between the institution and programme level:

- Where accountability best sits, with either the accountable person for the institution or programme
- How the standard is worded, with references to the education provider and processes often best sitting at the institution level, and references to the programme or profession often best sitting at the programme level
- We have preferred seeking assurance at the institution level, to fit with our intention to put the institution at the centre of our quality assurance model.

### **Our approach to quality assuring education**

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of institutions and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards

Institutions and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

### **The approval process**

We take a staged approach to quality assurance, as we need to understand practices which will support delivery of all programmes within an institution, prior to assessing the programme level detail. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we assess to be assured that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)
- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the process we will initially review the proposal and then design our assessment based on the issues we find. As such the assessment methods will be different based on the issues which arise in each case.

### **How we make decisions**

We make independent evidence-based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation 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 the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

## Section 2: Our assessment

### Stage 1 assessment: The institution

Institution	Boots Hearingcare
Accountable person	Karen Shepherd

Boots Hearingcare is a new institution to the HCPC. This means that we did not have any direct historical context or information to support whether institution level standards were met. Therefore, through this stage, we undertook partner-led assessment of the institution to consider whether institution level standards are met.

#### Evidence considered

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet institution-level standards. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), we use external sources of data to arrive at an institution performance score. External data points are not available for Boots Hearingcare, and therefore, we were not able to consider performance data through this exercise. We sought insight from the professional body, but we received no usable intelligence or insight from them.

#### Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

We appointed the following panel to assess the provider's submission against our institution level standards:

Registrant visitors	Jo Jackson - physiotherapist
	Joanna Lemanska – hearing aid dispenser
	Robert MacKinnon – hearing aid dispenser

#### Assessment of the institution

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard
- The visitors considered at there were no data points which we could use to as a basis for institution-level performance monitoring
- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information on
- The visitors requested further information, and on considering this information were satisfied the institution level standards are met at a threshold level

Further information about why the visitors were satisfied with each area is included as part of the [Summary of visitor findings](#) section of this report.

## Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

Education provider	Boots Hearingcare
Accountable person (for the programmes)	Karen Shepherd
Programmes	Boots HearingCare Qualification in Hearing Aid Dispensing
Profession	Hearing aid dispensers
Mode of study	Work based learning
Type of programme	Pre-registration
Qualification level	Certificate
Start date	1 September 2021
Intended learner numbers	20, one cohort per year

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

### Assessment of the proposed programmes

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard.
- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information around.
- Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors discussed and finalised the most appropriate quality activity to undertake this investigation.

### Quality activity

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary. We considered that it was appropriate and proportionate to request additional documentary evidence to address the issue that was outstanding prior to the quality activity. The theme we explored is as follows:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Reason for additional evidence</b>
Ensuring that educators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively	The visitors were unclear how the education provider ensures that the educators who will be delivering the content covering scientific theory have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively.

From their detailed documentary review of the additional evidence submitted, the visitors were satisfied with the clarification provided to address the theme identified above. As such, they were able to recommend approval of the institution and the programmes considered.

### **Summary of visitor findings**

#### **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register**

The visitors were satisfied that the programme aligns with the level of qualification expected for entry onto the Register as a hearing aid dispenser. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider had designed the programme using the QAA Foundation Degree benchmark framework, and was set up to ensure the quality of an award equivalent to this level. The visitors considered this appropriate to meet this standard.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

#### **SET 2: Programme admissions**

The visitors noted that there was clear information provided about the academic and professional entry and selection criteria onto the programme. They were confident that the entry criteria laid out are appropriate to the level and content of the programme and were assured that learners who complete the programme would be able to meet our standards for registration.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

#### **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership**

The education provider demonstrated that appropriate resources are provided to all learners, including access to online materials and hardware, and IT support. They saw that there is an adequate number of staff in place and clear processes in place to promote the role of practice educator to support students. The visitors considered the education provider had clear processes in place to address placement capacity. The education provider showed that there is effective collaboration between themselves and practice education providers.

The education provider demonstrated that subject areas will be delivered by educators with relevant knowledge.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

#### **SET 4: Programme design and delivery**

The evidence submitted by the education provider demonstrated how the curriculum delivers the standards of proficiency (SOPs). As such, the visitors were satisfied that

learners who successfully complete the programme would be equipped with the necessary skills to practice as autonomous professionals.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

### **SET 5: Practice-based learning**

The visitors could see how well practice-based learning was integrated into the programme and the learning outcomes would be delivered through the range of practice based learning opportunities. There was sufficient evidence in the documentation to demonstrate to the visitors there is a clear process for ensuring an adequate number of staff, and that they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency. This was showed together with a well-developed administration and teaching structure.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

### **SET 6: Assessment**

The visitors were able to see that the assessment strategy is clear and ensures that effectively assess the learning outcomes are effectively assessed so learners who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs.

On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

## **Section 3: The visitors' recommendations**

Based on these findings the visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

### **Institution and programme approval**

- The education provider has demonstrated that all standards of education and training are met through this exercise. This means that the institution and the programme should be approved, without conditions.

### **Future interaction with the performance review process**

- The visitors were satisfied that the institution meets our standards at a threshold level
- The visitors recognised we are unable to source performance data points externally, and equivalent data points were not established through this exercise
- The visitors considered there to be no other known risks with the institution's ability to run professional programmes
- To take continued assurance at an institution level, we need data points that show how an institution is performing. Monitoring these data points allows us

to apply a bespoke approach to interacting with providers, including when we ask them to engage with the performance review process

- Without these data points to monitor, the maximum reasonable length between submissions is two years. This is equivalent to the gaps between active submission in the previous quality assurance model, which did not use data to inform decision making in a structured way
- Therefore, the visitors recommend that the institution should interact with our performance review process after two years, that is in the academic year 2023-24
- This allows for two full years of the programme running, which can be reflected on through their portfolio submission
- If the education provider would like to achieve a longer period between monitoring submission beyond this, the visitors recommend that they work with the HCPC to establish equivalent performance data points.

#### Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 28 September 2021.

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## Approval process quality report

Education provider	Queen Margaret University
Name of programme(s)	MSc Dramatherapy (Full time)
Date Assessment commenced	14/04/2021
Visitor recommendation made	11/08/2021
Case reference	CAS-01031-M0X5Y2

### **Summary of findings from this assessment**

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme detailed in this report meets our standards of education and training. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

The outcomes of this process were as follows:

- Further Stage 1 assessment was not required based on the new programme(s) being proposed for delivery.
- The visitors recommended the programme be approved as all programme level standards were met through their Stage 2 assessment.

The Education and Training Committee will now meet to consider the visitors recommendations and make a decision regarding programme approval.

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## Section 1: Background information

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## Section 2: Our assessment

### Stage 1 assessment: The institution

Education provider	Queen Margaret University
Accountable person	Dawn Martin

As part of the initiation of the process the education provider indicated that the proposed programme would be part of the School of Health Sciences at Queen Margaret University. This institution is well established with HCPC and currently delivers approved programmes in almost all professions regulated by the HCPC. In particular for the purposes of this process, we note that the education provider delivers art therapy and music therapy programmes, two of the three modalities within the arts therapy profession.

In previous standards assessments of these programmes, visitors have established the institution level standards are met. The provider has also demonstrated this through ongoing monitoring carried out by the HCPC.

The education provider has defined the policies, procedures and processes that apply to the programmes they deliver. These relate to the institution level standards we set which ensure the following areas are managed effectively:

Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information for applicants</li><li>• Assessing English language, character, and health</li><li>• Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)</li><li>• Equality, diversity and inclusion</li></ul>
Governance and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective programme delivery</li><li>• Effective staff management</li><li>• Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level</li></ul>
Quality, monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Academic components, including how curricula are kept up to date</li><li>• Practice components, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments</li><li>• Learner involvement</li><li>• Service user and carer involvement</li></ul>
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support</li><li>• Ongoing professional suitability</li><li>• Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)</li><li>• Equality, diversity and inclusion</li></ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objectivity</li><li>• Progression and achievement</li><li>• Appeals</li></ul>

## Assurance that institution level standards are met

As part of this stage we considered how the proposed programmes fit into the institution by considering any notable changes to the policies, procedures and processes related to the areas above.

We considered how the proposed programmes are assimilated with the management of existing approved programmes in the institution. On this basis, we were satisfied it is appropriate for the programme to sit as part of the School of Health Sciences and take assurance the institution level standards will continue to be met by its introduction.

## Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

Education provider	Queen Margaret University
Accountable person (for the programmes)	Dawn Martin
Programmes	MSc Dramatherapy
Profession	Arts therapist
Modality	Dramatherapy
Mode of study	Full time
Learner numbers	15 learners once a year
Type of programme	Pre-registration Masters
Start date	September 2021

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

## Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information against our programme level standards:

Registrant visitors	Janek Dubowski – arts therapist (art therapy)
	Belinda Sherlock – arts therapist (drama therapy)

## Assessment of the proposal

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard.

- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information around.
- Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors discussed and finalised the most appropriate quality activity to undertake this investigation.

### **Quality activity**

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary.

The visitors considered following review of the submission that further quality activity was not required. This was due to the high quality information supplied through the submission, which addressed standards as required.

Within their considerations, the visitors noted that the institution runs arts therapy provision in the other modalities, and that this new proposal aligns to and draws on the existing provision. This means that many profession specific areas of programme design and delivery are already well tested and can be scaled across to the new proposal.

### **Summary of visitor findings**

#### SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

The visitors considered that Master's level was an appropriate level of qualification.

On this basis, the visitors considered that the education provider's approach to meeting this standard was appropriate to meet the standards.

#### SET 2: Programme admissions

The evidence supplied to the visitors included a Programme Document outlining the admissions procedures. These were very similar to the procedures and approaches used on the existing approved art therapy and music therapy programmes at the education provider, within the same institution. These had already been considered and approved by previous HCPC processes. With the information supplied, and with the knowledge that these procedures and approaches were currently in use, the visitors considered that they were appropriate when applied to the dramatherapy programme, and so that the dramatherapy programme met the standards.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area.

### SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

A Programme Document and a programme handbook were included in the submission. The visitors considered that the management structures, the rationale and senior support for the programme, and the organisation of the programme set out in this evidence was appropriate, and as noted above, were closely akin to those already in place for the other arts therapy programmes in the institution. Curriculum vitae were provided for staff and these individuals and their time commitments were considered to be appropriate for the delivery of the programme. The visitors were also aware that the education provider was an extremely experienced provider of HCPC-approved programmes.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area.

### SET 4: Programme design and delivery

Discussions with the programme team prior to the stage 2 submission established that the design and delivery of the programme was closely modelled on the existing approved arts therapy programmes. It was agreed with the HCPC that the SOPs mapping exercise could be based on the existing SOPs mapping document that had been produced for the currently approved programmes. This was on the understanding that the necessary changes were made so that the document gave a clear sense of how the new programme would deliver and assess the SOPs that were specific to the dramatherapy modality.

In the documentation the agreed SOPs mapping exercise and a programme leader's handbook were supplied, which enabled the visitors to undertake a detailed review of how the SOPs would be delivered and assessed on the new programme, in the dramatherapy modality. The visitors considered that the learning outcomes were appropriately aligned with SOPs and SCPEs and the curriculum content and the inter-professional education would prepare learners appropriately for practice.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area.

### SET 5: Practice-based learning

As part of the stage 2 SETs mapping, the education provider cited the programme handbook, correspondence with practice partners and staff CVs to show that they were able to provide a good structure, duration and range of practice-based learning, and that the practice educators in place were appropriate and sufficient in number. They also noted that the practice-based learning for this programme would be integrated into existing approved institution frameworks.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area.

## SET 6: Assessment

The Programme Document gave the visitors a clear understanding of how assessment would work on the programme, and indicated that it would be modelled on the existing approved approaches in arts therapy. The visitors had a clear understanding from the programme leader's handbook of how assessment would enable learners to meet the SOPs and the SCPEs and to progress through the programme. They were satisfied that the assessment would be effective, based on the diverse range and spacing of the assessments.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area.

### Section 3: The visitors' recommendations

Based on these findings the visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

#### **Programme approval**

The programme is recommended for approval, without conditions.

### Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 28 September 2021.