

Approval process report

Edge Hill University, Operating Department Practice, 2021-22

Executive summary

The visitors are recommending approval of the programme without conditions. There are no referrals to any other process and no issues that need to be explored through other processes. This report will be submitted to the meeting of the Education and Training Panel on 31 August 2022.

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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

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

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

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

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Julie Weir	Lead visitor, Operating Department Practitioner
John Head	Lead visitor, Prosthetist / orthotist
Niall Gooch	Education Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 3 HCPC-approved programmes across 2 professions plus 3 HCPC-approved Prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2006.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2010
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2009
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2006

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	550	350	2022	The disparity here between Edge Hill's actual and expected enrolment suggests that there may be some issues around sustainability of programmes, if they are not recruiting to full strength, and that we should review submissions with this in mind. However it may also indicate outdated or inaccurate figures.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2019-20	This figure suggests that Edge Hill do not have a problem with supporting learners to continue programmes of study.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	99%	2018-19	This figure shows that Edge Hill do a good job in preparing learners to enter the workforce or proceed to further study.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	Gold		June 2017	This suggests an extremely high standard of teaching at Edge Hill.

National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	74.7%	65.8%	2022	Edge Hill are well below their benchmark for learner satisfaction – we should pay particular attention to learner experience but also bear in mind that the pandemic is likely to have had a significant impact on learner experience during the last two and a half years.
HCPC performance review cycle length				This is not applicable because Edge Hill have not yet been through the performance review process.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Information for applicants –**
 - This is an apprenticeship, so the admissions process is somewhat different to that on the standard Edge Hill University (EHU) procedure. Learners are recruited by employer partners. Employers are then required to go through an approval process with the university following EHU's apprentice recruitment strategy.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - EHU have indicated that they will follow a very similar approach here as on the current approved provision, as there is no need to change the existing approach.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - EHU have stated that they intend to follow the exact same procedure as on the existing approved undergraduate operating department practice programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The same policies will apply as on the existing undergraduate ODP programme and on the other HCPC-approved programmes at EHU.

The approaches and procedures laid out here suggest that the new apprenticeship will be appropriately aligned with existing institutional approaches as set out for the HCPC in previous approval processes.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ –**
 - EHU currently deliver an undergraduate BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice, alongside a range of other HCPC-approved programmes. This apprenticeship is based on that existing provision, with the necessary changes having been made. This suggests we can be confident that the provider can deliver at an appropriate level.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The apprenticeship will be integrated with the existing arrangements for programme sustainability for the approved undergraduate programme and other HCPC-approved provision at EHU .
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - EHU are planning to deliver the academic components of the programme integrated with the existing approved programme. They have made clear that they will take the same approach with the apprenticeship delivery as on the existing undergraduate ODP programme.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - The apprenticeship will be taught and managed from within the same programme team as the existing approved programme. The provider plan additional staff recruitment to ensure appropriate capacity for the apprenticeship, as there will be an overall increase in learner numbers.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - EHU intend to make use of existing placement partners to deliver this apprenticeship. Delivery plans and co-operation agreements developed for existing provision will be adjusted and amended as necessary. There is an existing institutional approval process for taking on new apprenticeship employers.

All the processes and procedures noted above suggest that the apprenticeship will be well-integrated into existing provision.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**

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

- The apprenticeship will make use of existing quality procedures within the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine (FHSCM). The faculty as a whole already delivers apprenticeship programmes in other curriculum areas, so quality procedures can be amended as necessary for the new programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
- The FHSCM has established practice quality monitoring procedures, including for the existing approved ODP programme. The new apprenticeship will be integrated within these processes.
- **Learner involvement –**
- All programmes at EHU are required to involve learners and this apprenticeship will use the existing processes for doing so on the current undergraduate ODP programme. Apprentices will be required to sign up to a statement of commitment, and to undergo a skills scan at the start of the programme, and at yearly intervals to ensure progress.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
- From previous engagement with the HCPC, it is clear that EHU have strong arrangements for service user and carer involvement and the new programme will make use of these as necessary.

It is clear from the information we have available that the apprenticeship will be well-integrated into existing quality monitoring structures.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
- The key addition to the arrangements for the existing ODP undergraduate programme is that regular tripartite meetings will take place at regular intervals between learners, employers and the personal academic tutor. Otherwise support arrangements will be identical to the approved provision. The provider has clarified that learners will be supernumerary in their workplaces.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
- EHU have stated that processes for ensuring ongoing suitability of learners will be modelled on the existing undergraduate ODP programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
- The arrangements for interprofessional education on the new apprenticeship will be closely modelled on those on the existing approved ODP programme, with the same aims and objectives.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
- The apprenticeship will use existing EDI policies and processes in place at EHU to ensure that the programme aligns with institutional values and approaches in this area.

In light of the above we can be confident that the arrangements for learners on the apprenticeship will closely follow the arrangements for EHU's existing HCPC-approved provision.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - Procedures to ensure objectivity in assessment for the apprenticeship will be closely modelled on those on EHU's current HCPC-approved provision, especially the existing undergraduate ODP programme.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - Generally the expectations for progression and achievement will be the same as on the current provision, with the necessary changes made taking into account the apprenticeship structure. The key addition for the apprenticeship is an End Point Assessment (EPA), requiring the provider to become an EPAO (End Point Assessment Organisation).
- **Appeals –**
 - The same appeals process will apply for academic appeals as apply for the undergraduate programme and for EHU's other allied health provision.

Given the information provided by EHU for these areas, it is clear that there is good alignment between the proposed new provision and their existing arrangements for current approved programmes.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice - Apprenticeship	FT	Operating Department Practitioner	30 learners, one cohort per year	19/09/2022

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment

- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –

Selection and entry criteria had been amended to reflect the requirements for apprenticeships (with reference to SET 2.2). The visitors considered that the amendments made were appropriate and in line with what was required to ensure that apprentices were suitable and ready for the programme.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area, and there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –

The visitors considered that the standards in this area were met at threshold. In particular they considered that EHU had good ongoing collaboration with placement partners (3.5) and that they could deliver appropriate capacity for practice-based learning (3.6). They also considered that the staffing arrangements were appropriate to deliver the apprenticeship (3.9 and 3.10) and that there were procedures in place for providing support to apprentices (3.12). They did make some recommendations in this area (see Recommendations below).

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area, and there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**

The visitors considered that all the standards in this area were met at threshold. They reviewed the modules and learning outcomes of the programme (4.1 and 4.2) and the approach taken to ensuring that the curriculum content was appropriate, effective and up-to-date. There was good alignment between learning outcomes and both the standards of proficiency (SOPs) and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs). They were satisfied that the curriculum content and the inter-professional education would prepare learners appropriately for practice. They did make some recommendations in this area (see Recommendations below).

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area, and there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

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

The visitors considered that the standards in this area were met at threshold. Evidence was provided to show that the provider were able to provide a good structure, duration and range of practice-based learning (5.2), and that the practice educators in place were appropriate and sufficient in number (5.5 and 5.6). They also noted that the practice-based learning would be an integral part of the programme (5.1).

The visitors also noted that the placements would support the apprenticeship effectively because of their close integration with the academic components.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area, and there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

- **SET 6: Assessment –**

The documentation 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. The visitors had a clear understanding from the programme leaders' handbooks of how assessment would enable learners to meet the SOPs and the SCPEs (6.1 and 6.2) 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 (6.5).

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:

- The visitors considered that EHU had very strong working relationships with practice partners and that this would be highly beneficial for an apprenticeship.
- They also noted that the apprenticeship was effectively integrated with existing provision.

Therefore, we were satisfied that standards are met in this area, and there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

Section 5: Referrals

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

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

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

Recommendation: The visitors considered that while this standard was met at threshold, there was a risk that the education provider might struggle to find enough placement capacity if they did not continue to work on maintaining sufficient capacity among their existing partners.

Reason: From their review of the submission, the visitors were aware that the education provider intended to rely on their existing networks of practice-based learning providers for ensuring the ongoing viability of apprentice placements. They considered that this was probably appropriate but might create a future risk that apprenticeship placements were not sustainable. The visitors were aware of pressure on placements in the region local to EHU and that apprenticeships had different requirements on employers and providers in terms of capacity and time. They suggest therefore that the education provider ensure that their good ongoing relationships with providers are used to ensure that apprentice placements are always viable.

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

Recommendation: The visitors considered that while this standard was met at threshold, there was a risk that, due to the possible differing needs of apprentice students, if there was not an identified member of the programme team to take specific responsibility for the programme, the time and focus needed to deliver the apprenticeship may not be available, as intended.

Reason: From their review of the submission, the visitors were aware that the education provider intended to recruit an extra full-time staff members to aid with the delivery of the apprenticeship. However, they considered that it was not clear how the education provider would ensure that the staff member's time was committed

specifically to the apprenticeship. The visitors therefore suggest that the provider consider how best to ensure that their staff time allocations are appropriately balanced between the existing provision and the apprenticeship, and that it is not assumed that resources required for these learners will be identical to those on the direct entry programme.

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

Recommendation: The visitors considered that this standard was met at threshold. However, they did note that in the curriculum planning, the close similarity between the projected learning journeys for learners on the apprenticeship and on the existing approved programme might mean that, due to the potential differing needs and academic preparedness of apprenticeship learners, there may be unrealistic expectations of these students to meet achievement and progression at the same rate as direct entry learners.

Reason: The visitors viewed a curriculum planning document which showed the knowledge and skills that learners were expected to have at various stages of the apprenticeship. They were aware that this was similar to that on the standard undergraduate programme, even though learners on that programme were working on a different pathway. They considered that this might mean that there were unrealistic expectations on learners on the apprenticeship, because they might be expected to maintain equal progress when it was not possible for them to do so because they were on a different track. The visitors suggest that the provider consider how best to manage the expectations of the apprentices to ensure that this does not happen.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that all standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2010
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice - Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			19/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2018
Dip HE Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2003
Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Practice	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2009
MSci Nurse Paramedic	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2020
Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/07/2006
Non-Medical Prescribing (Level 6)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing (Level 7)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014