Approval process report

University of Sunderland, Occupational Therapy, 2021-22

Executive summary

This report covers our review of the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Accelerated) and the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Apprenticeship) at the University of Sunderland. The visitors are recommending approval of the programmes without conditions. The visitors had some concerns about the potential impact the length of the two-year degree apprenticeship programme could have on the health and wellbeing of learners. They noted that degree apprenticeships are typically four years in duration. The provider stated there is no difference in what the apprentices will learn when compared to their colleagues on the existing BSc (Hons) programme and the new Accelerated programme. However, given this group of learners are employed in their day job, whilst studying the programme, the visitors considered there is a potential impact the compressed length of the programme could have on the health and wellbeing of the learners.

They were however satisfied that both programmes, upon successful completion, allow learners to meet the standards of proficiency for occupational therapists. The visitors considered all standards met through this approval process.

To be able to assess any possible future impact on learners on the degree apprenticeship programme, we will undertake a focused review process. This report will be submitted to the meeting of the Education and Training Panel on 31 August 2022.

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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

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

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:
- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

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:

Jennifer Caldwell	Lead visitor, Occupational Therapist
Patricia McClure	Lead visitor, Occupational Therapist
Ian Hughes	Service User Expert Advisor
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer
Rabie Sultan	Education Officer (up to visitor feedback of stage 1)

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 15 HCPC-approved programmes across four professions. They also provide a post-registration prescribing programme. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2006.

In 2020, the education provider went through our legacy major change process to introduce a new degree apprenticeship and a two-year accelerated Occupational Therapy programme from September 2021. The proposal was to have up to a maximum of twelve learners per cohort for each of the new programmes. They explained that the two programmes will be based on their existing approved BSc

(Hons) in Occupational Therapy programme, but instead will be delivered over two years with altered practice-based learning hours.

Following a review of initial and additional evidence, the visitors did not receive sufficient evidence our standards would be met. They therefore recommended that an approval visit should be undertaken to consider the approval of the programmes. This meant the programmes could not commence on the proposed date of September 2021. The visitors' recommendation was agreed by our Education and Training Panel on 25 August 2021. Their decision stated "The Panel were not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the standards continue to be met for the reasons(s) noted in the section 5 of the Visitor's report. The Panel agreed that the areas identified as outstanding were best considered through the approval process".

Following the introduction of our new quality assurance model in September 2021, it was agreed, we would assess the changes through the approval process. We noted that a number of our institution-wide standards were unmet through the major change process, therefore we needed to undertake an institution-level assessment before reviewing the programmes against our programme-level standards.

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	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2006
	Occupational therapy	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2019
	Paramedic	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2016
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2020

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	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	449	303	2021/22	There is a significant difference in the number of learners compared to the benchmark. However, through our review we have no concerns around the number of learners at this institution.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	1%	2021/22	This report from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that a very small number of learners not continuing which may indicate a very high percentage of learners are satisfied with their learning at this institution.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	98%	2021/22	Another data from HESA indicating that a high percentage of learners who successfully complete their learning at this institution make significant progress after their studies.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2017	This is the most recent award issued to the education provider by the TEF and may not provide an up-to-date reflection of teaching quality. A silver award would indicate that the institution is doing well.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	76.0%	90.8%	2022	This data from the Office for Students (OfS) indicates a high percentage of learners are satisfied with their learning.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. As the approval of the new programmes stemmed from a legacy major change process, the education provider was required to demonstrate how the programmes met institution-wide standards that were

outstanding. This meant they were not required to demonstrate how the new programmes align with existing institutional policies, processes and procedures.

Stage 1 assessment – provider submission

Although the institution runs HCPC-approved provision, following the decision of the Education and Training Committee on 25 August 2021, we needed to make a judgement they met a set of institution-level standards by directly assessing them through a visitor-led review. The major change visitors' report and Education and Training Committee decision notice are attached as Appendices 2 and 3.

The standards we considered via a visitor led Stage 1 assessment were:

- 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.

- 3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

- 3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

- 3.8 Learners must be involved in 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.

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

- 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.

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes

referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

<u>Quality theme 1 – Admissions information provided to applicants</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the admissions information provided was the institution-wide guidelines. It was not clear if the same information will be provided to applicants on the proposed programmes. The visitors requested clarification around the information that is provided to applicants to the new programmes to ascertain if this follows the institutional policy and whether the information is such that would allow applicants to make an informed decision about the programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested email clarification as we considered this would sufficiently provide the clarity needed.

Outcomes of exploration: From the education provider's response, the visitors noted the admissions process for all pre-registration Occupational Therapy routes. They also noted, for the degree apprenticeship programme, there was an additional document with regard to existing staff who wish to apply and people applying for new apprenticeship role. This process was agreed with workplace colleagues. The visitors noted a clear outline of the admissions process and were satisfied that the process ensures applicants can access information that would assist them in deciding on the programmes.

<u>Quality theme 2 – Sustainability</u>

Area for further exploration: To demonstrate sustainability, the visitors were referred to several documents including the Framework for Academic Workloading, Annual Review Process and the Stakeholder Engagement document. Through their review, the visitors could not find what information or plans were in place to determine the sustainability of the proposed Occupational Therapy programmes. There was also no evidence to demonstrate the need for the programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: The visitors requested further evidence / information that demonstrates the programmes and the institution continue to be sustainable.

Outcomes of exploration: From the response submitted, the visitors understood that the proposed programmes are part of a suite of Allied Health Professional programmes which have been developed or, are being developed, within the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. The University Executive have full oversight of the developments. The programmes are noted within the learner number planning for the education provider and the staffing plans are in place to support the growth. The visitors were satisfied both the institution and programmes are secure, there is sufficient support from the senior management and all stakeholders are involved in the development and support.

<u>Quality theme 3 – Involvement of learners</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors received no evidence of how learner involvement will be facilitated. The education provider's Student Learning Engagement and Student Representation documents were provided but there was no documentation specific to the proposed programmes which outlined how learners are/will be involved in the programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: To help us understand how learners are involved in the proposed programmes, we asked the education provider to explain in a narrative how this is/will be done. We considered examples of type/levels of involvement and frequency may also provide further context.

Outcomes of exploration: We understood from the response provided that learners are involved in both the accelerated and the Degree Apprenticeship Occupational Therapy programmes. For both programmes, year group representatives will have monthly meetings with their programme leader. Learners who act as Student Ambassadors assist with open days and interviews throughout the academic year. The visitors were satisfied that learners are involved in the programmes and their level of involvement aligns with that of the wider institution policy.

Quality theme 4 – Support for learners

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the University Personal Tutoring Policy provided but there was no specific information regarding the application of this policy within the proposed programmes nor any examples of support practices available within the programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: To understand how learners on the proposed programmes will be supported, we requested further information on the arrangements in place to support their wellbeing and learning needs throughout the programmes. We requested to see specific additional support in place for the apprentice learners and learners on the accelerated programme as they will have some different learning needs due to the different programme models.

Outcomes of exploration: In addition to the support services available to learners across the education provider, the provider listed several other support services available for learners on both programmes. These included:
- allocation of personal tutor to each learner – who will receive a postcard from their tutor prior to the induction week as part of informal introduction;
- group tutorial with personal tutor for first year learners as part of the formal introduction during the induction week;
- every module has an assessment brief which is delivered live and recorded, learners are also supported with individual tutorials from the module team;
- learners undertaking reassessments are supported by their personal tutor and the module team; and
- professional lead's bi-monthly session which is open to all Occupational Therapy learners.

In addition to the above, apprentices will have monthly meetings with the academic liaison tutor. The accelerated learners will have monthly, peer group meetings with their programme leader.

The visitors noted sufficient evidence that demonstrated learners on the new programmes will have access to both academic and pastoral support that suits their needs.

Quality theme 5 – Interprofessional education

Area for further exploration: Through their documentary review, the visitors noted there was no documentation provided outlining the School's interprofessional learning (IPL) opportunities available to the learners. The module descriptor for Personal & Professional Development 1 identified that IPL opportunities will be available through various simulated practice scenarios, however no examples were provided. There was no programme specific information provided and it was unclear whether the institutional policy applies to the proposed programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: To understand the IPL opportunities that exist to learners on the new programmes, we requested further information of the IPL policy and how it is implemented within the School. We also requested examples and frequency of IPL within both the academic and practice placement settings.

Outcomes of exploration: From the response provided, the visitors understood that currently learners on the existing Occupational Therapy programme undertake IPL with learners on Physiotherapy, Paramedic, Fashion and Design and Performing Arts programmes. Learners in their third year also have the opportunity to attend the mobility week winter school hosted in Switzerland (on-line). They also work with a school or college to promote occupational therapy. Learners on the proposed programmes will be given the same opportunity alongside other IPL opportunities both in academic and practice-based learning settings.

The visitors were satisfied that learners on the new learners will benefit from IPL opportunities relevant to them for their future professional practice and for service users and carers.

Quality theme 6 – Attendance monitoring

Area for further exploration: The General University policy briefly outlined how attendance is monitored in the Student Engagement document. However, programme specific information was not provided. The visitors considered it useful to understand how attendance will be monitored on the new programmes given their different model.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We asked the provider to clarify how attendance will be monitored and followed up in both the apprenticeship and accelerated programmes. In addition, we requested to know about the procedures to deal with non-attendance issues.

Outcomes of exploration: From the education provider's response, we understood for both programmes all on-campus sessions are monitored by the learners swiping their student card on the electronic recording system. On-line session attendance is

recorded on MS Teams, which is then transferred on to attendance registers. Staff also record attendance if the session is in a place without the swipe system (for example if at the swimming pool or at the community loans store). All learners are required to record their non-attendance and provide evidence for any absence so it may be approved. For apprentices when they are in their workplace, they will report absence to their employer and upload on to their student record.

The visitors noted satisfactory evidence of how attendance will be monitored on both programmes and how non-attendance issues will be dealt with.

Quality theme 7 – Learners' progression and achievement

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the general university policy provided regarding progression. However, it was not clear how this will be implemented within the apprenticeship and accelerated programmes due to the different models of delivery.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested email clarification to understand whether there are any special processes/timelines in place for the proposed programmes.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider referred us to sections of the programme handbook which highlighted how learners' progression and achievement will be measured on the new programmes. In their Assessment Length Framework document, we noted the principles used to develop assessment lengths and a breakdown of the different assessments. The Proposed Semester Plan for the new programmes provided a detailed timeline of both teaching and assessment.

The visitors were satisfied there were appropriate processes and procedures in place to measure the progression and achievement of learners on the new programmes.

Outcomes from stage 1

From their review of the documentary submission, and on exploring themes through quality activity, the visitors were satisfied the institution-level standards which were previously outstanding following the major change process are now met, and that assessment should continue to stage 2 of the process.

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - The University Admissions policy is set at institution level and applies to all programmes with minor variations to some programmes with Professional Statutory Regulatory Body requirement. Through quality activities, the visitors saw evidence of the education provider's process of ensuring applicants to the proposed programmes have the information they need to enable them to make informed decisions about the programmes. Because of this, the visitors were satisfied that the relevant standard within this SET area is met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –

- o The education provider's strategic plan outlines their aim for all programmes to be educationally and financially sustainable. The new programmes are part of a suite of Allied Health Professional programmes being developed within the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. The education provider's executive team have full oversight of this development and provide support needed, particularly in staffing, to ensure the institution and its programmes are secure.
  - o There is evidence of how service user involvement will be integrated into the new programmes.
  - o Through quality activities, the education provider demonstrated different opportunities for learners on the new programmes to be involved.
  - o The education provider has several arrangements in place to support learners on both programmes. In addition to the support available to all learners, Apprentices have additional support in place. This includes monthly meetings with their academic liaison tutor and peer group meetings with their programme leader.
  - o The visitors were satisfied that stakeholders are committed to supporting the new programmes and the education provider has policies and processes in place that will ensure learners can access the support they need.
  - o The visitors were satisfied that standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o The education provider's Interprofessional Learning (IPL) Strategy is applied at faculty level. Through quality activities, we saw evidence that learners on the new programmes will have access to IPL both within allied health professions as well as other professions.
  - o There is sufficient evidence to demonstrate how learners' attendance is monitored both in academic, including online and in practice-based learning.
  - o The visitors saw sufficient evidence to determine that the institutional standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o The assessment and marking policies are applied at institutional level. Through quality activities, the visitors saw a range of assessments used throughout the programmes which align with the institution's policy and processes. There was also evidence demonstrating how the different assessments ensure learners' progression and achievement can be measured. Information in the programme handbook showed learners have access to what is expected of them at each stage of the programme.
  - o The visitors were satisfied that the assessments are effective and fair and would allow learners to demonstrate their progression and achievement.
  - o The visitors therefore considered the standards within this SET area met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: None

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) Occupational Therapy (Accelerated)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Occupational therapist	12 learners, 1 cohort	01/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational therapist	12 learners, 1 cohort	01/09/2022

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

The standards we considered via a Stage 2 assessment were:

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

- 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

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

- 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.

- 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.

- 5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

- 5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

- 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.

- 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.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

Quality theme 1 – Staffing – both academic and practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted an outline of staffing plans which showed one senior lecturer in 2021/22, two senior lecturers in 2022/23 and one senior lecturer in 2023/24. The visitors also noted a commitment to review staff student ratios if learner numbers increase. However, it was unclear whether the proposed staff numbers have been confirmed by the senior management. There was

also lack of clarity about how the education provider will ensure there is adequate staff to cover additional visits to the apprentice learners' place of work and liaison with the workplace.

The visitors saw that one member of the teaching staff appeared to be more loaded with work. There is evidence of continuing professional development (CPD re-education) for academic staff but little or no evidence of CPD activities or development within their profession knowledge/skills. The visitors also did not see any information about the use of visiting lecturer experts.

Regarding practice-based learning staff, the visitors noted a list of the practice educators who would be involved in the programmes. However, the document did not specify their areas of expertise/practice, therefore it was not clear how the education provider ensures the numbers are adequate and they have the appropriate qualifications and experience.

From the initial documentary submission, the visitors could not determine how the education provider will ensure an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff both in teaching and in practice-based learning. In addition, the visitors did not identify sufficient evidence to demonstrate there are educators with the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver parts of the programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested email clarification on the education provider's position around staffing numbers. We also requested the education provider explain how they will ensure breadth and depth of staff expertise within the delivery of the curriculum. We also asked the education provider to demonstrate there is adequate number of staff with relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners in practice-based learning.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response to the quality activity, we noted the education provider now has five senior lecturers secured for the 2021/22 academic year and an additional senior lecturer. The evidence also showed another lecturer has been approved by the executive team for 2022/23. The planned timetable for 2022/23 showed that each staff would have a day off in practice to maintain their occupational therapy skills plus additional time for ad hoc or administrative functions. Additionally, staff can undertake additional specific training identified in their annual review. The visitors also noted a list of visiting lecturers who will be involved in the programmes. As such, the visitors were satisfied there will be an adequate number of staff, including those with specialist knowledge and expertise, involved in teaching on the programmes.

With regard to staff in practice-based learning, the visitors noted there is a variety of staff available. These include practice educators from local NHS trusts, Social Care, Private and Charitable organisations. Through the education provider's audit document, we noted the systems in place which ensure practice educators are suitable and able to support and develop learners in a safe and effective way.

Therefore, the visitors were also satisfied that practice-based learning is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced staff with the necessary skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.

<u>Quality theme 2 – Structure, duration and range of practice-based learning for learners on the degree apprenticeship programme</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the apprentices will be working 37.5 hours per week. Given this amount of time spent working, the visitors considered it may be challenging, given the compressed timetable, for the learners to complete sufficient hours of practice-based learning to support the achievement of the learning outcomes. The visitors noted there is not much leeway for learners who take sick leave during practice-based learning nor for bank holidays and any occasional days off required for family events. The visitors therefore could not determine how the education provider ensures the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning would support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: Through an email response, the visitors sought further clarification on the number of hours the apprentices will spend in practice-based learning. They also requested to know the arrangements in place for learners who miss periods of placement due to illness and unforeseen absences and are therefore short of their hours. The visitors considered it useful to also know how regularly placement hours are monitored and who is responsible for this.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider explained that learners will undertake 37.5 hours of practice placement per week during their placements. At the end of each block of placement there is either a holiday or a flipped class week, where any missed hours can be made up. Learners' hours are checked each week whilst out on placement by their practice educator. Any issues are immediately communicated to the Practice Placement Tutor and arrangements made to catch up. On the completion of placement, the Practice Placement Tutor reviews all the hours for each learner and keeps a running record.

The visitors were satisfied from the response that practice-based learning is designed in a way which supports learners in achieving the learning outcomes and the SOPs for occupational therapists.

<u>Quality theme 3 – Assessment</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors saw a variety of assessments in the submission. They also noted a range of assessments as based on the existing approved 3-year BSc (Hons) programme learning outcomes. However, they considered the impact the length of the programmes could have on assessment. For example, the visitors considered the shortened length of the programme could make it difficult for learners to undertake a resit of an academic or practice-based learning module. The visitors noted there was no information about such impact in the Assessment Strategy.

The visitors noted evidence in the module descriptors and placement handbooks how learners will be assessed to demonstrate they understand the expectations associated with being a regulated professional. However, they also considered the impact the length of the programmes could have on the delivery of the standards of conduct, performance, and ethics (SCPEs). Similar to the above, the visitors considered the potential impact of learning not having the opportunity to undertake resits relating to the assessment of the SCPEs.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: Through email response, the visitors requested information about how the education provider considers the impact the completion of all the assessments within two years may have on learners' ability to meet the SOPs and the SCPEs. The visitors also requested clarification on when learners will complete resit academic submissions including resit placements. The visitors were satisfied this clarification can be provided through email response. The visitors also requested to know how apprentices will be supported to demonstrate the SCPEs and make the transition from working in a support/assistant role to a qualified, professional role.

Outcomes of exploration: Through quality activity, the visitors understood learners will be able to meet all the SOPs and SCPEs in the time available, as they have the same number of academic, practical and placement hours in the two programmes as the learners on the existing BSc (Hons) programme.

The Semester Timeline with assessments and retrieval provided the details of when assessments will be undertaken and where retrieval opportunities are available. In addition, we understood that apprentices will have the same opportunities as other learners to develop the skills to transition, through a developmental approach. They will also have further opportunities through the mentorship they will receive from their practice mentor and assessor, as well as the regular tripartite meetings.

The visitors were satisfied that through the assessments, learners can achieve the learning outcomes, meet the SOPs for occupational therapists and demonstrate they understand the expectations of being a regulated professional.

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.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards that were outstanding from the major change report of August 2021. 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 2: Programme admissions** –
  - The selection and entry criteria for the new programmes are the same as the existing approved BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy programme. There is support from employers to provide bespoke learning plans to prospective apprentices who may require additional support.
  - The visitors are satisfied the entry requirements for the programmes as well as support provided to prospective applicants would ensure they are able to meet our standards for registration once they have successfully completed the programmes. They therefore considered this SET met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - There is evidence of collaboration between the education provider and their practice education providers through Practice Placement Forum meetings and other regular meetings. In addition, there are drop in sessions with practice educators in the region. These also provide practice educators access to support they may need.
  - Evidence of service level agreements secured with practice partners and additional staff support for allocating placements demonstrates the education provider has effective processes in place to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning.
  - Assurances from the senior management team regarding staffing resources, in addition to already recruited staff, demonstrates the programmes will be adequately staffed with educators with appropriate qualifications and experience.
  - Evidence of specialist teaching space as well as specialist equipment and assessment resources in addition to several other resources available to both learners and educators demonstrate resources to support learning is adequate.
  - The visitors noted evidence demonstrating the programmes, including the practice-based element, will be properly managed. In addition, both staffing and physical resources, will be adequate to ensure effective delivery.
  - The visitors therefore considered standards within this SET area met.

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

- o The mapping of the learning outcomes to the SOPs demonstrated learners who complete the programmes would be able to meet the SOPs for occupational therapists.
- o Through the module descriptors, we noted sufficient evidence of how the SCPEs are taught on the programmes so we are confident learners are able to meet the expectations associated with being a regulated professional.
- o The learning and teaching methods support learners to achieve the learning outcomes.
- o Evidence provided in the module descriptors and the programme handbooks showed the delivery of the programme support autonomous and reflective thinking and support and develop evidence-based practice.
- o The visitors noted sufficient evidence demonstrated the programmes are designed and would be delivered in such a way that ensures learners who complete the programmes meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills and are fit to practise.
- o The visitors therefore considered standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o There is evidence that practice-based learning is central to the programme.
  - o Evidence of a timeline showing the structure, duration and range of what learners will learn in practice assured visitors that learners are supported to achieve the learning outcomes and the SOPs.
  - o There is also evidence of arrangements in place for learners who miss period of placements due to illness and unforeseen absences.
  - o There is evidence of adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to support learners in practice-based learning.
  - o The visitors were satisfied there are systems and processes in place to support practice-based learning and ensure learners are able to meet the learning outcomes.
  - o Therefore, the visitors considered the SET met.

- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o Evidence within the programme handbooks demonstrated the assessment strategy and design ensures learners are able to meet the SOPs by the time they complete the programmes.
  - o Through the module descriptors and the programme handbooks, we noted sufficient evidence that demonstrates learners will be able to meet the SCPEs in the time available.
  - o The visitors saw sufficient evidence that demonstrated assessments are designed in such a way that ensures learners are able to meet the learning outcomes and the SOPs for occupational therapists. Therefore, the visitors considered this SET met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: The visitors acknowledge the education provider's desire to be creative in the delivery of their new apprenticeship programme by offering to run it in two years. However, they considered this will place considerable pressure on the apprentices. The visitors

considered some of the challenges could be because they are likely to be under pressure to complete the programme in two years whilst continuing to deliver on their day job and manage their other personal responsibilities. Through their review, the visitors identified potential risks to the health and wellbeing of apprentices due to the programme's reduced length of two years. The visitors considered whilst this is a potential risk, they are satisfied the programme itself meet our standards. Therefore, they considered it useful to review the degree apprenticeship programme in two years' time via our focused review process to identify any possible impact the compressed length of the programme may have had on apprentices. This opportunity would also allow the provider to reflect on the programme and identify areas for improvement.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: None

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).

Recommendations

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

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Referrals to the focused review process

Length of the Degree Apprenticeship programme

Summary of issue: As outlined earlier in the report, the visitors had concerns about the length of the degree apprenticeship programme. They noted that degree apprenticeships are typically four years in duration. The provider stated there is no difference in what the apprentices will learn when compared to their colleagues on the existing BSc (Hons) programme. However, as this group of learners are still employed in their day job, whilst studying the programme, the visitors considered there is a potential impact the length of the programme could have on the health and wellbeing of the learners.

The visitors considered that a focused review process in two years' time, when the first cohort would have completed the degree apprenticeship programme, would help to identify any impact on learners and ensure the education provider has systems in place to manage such risk.

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 institution programmes should be approved. The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report.

Reason for next engagement recommendation: We consider that a focused review in two years' time would allow us to gather enough useful data about the learners to inform our decision making. This would also give the education provider an opportunity to reflect on the performance of the first cohort of the programme to identify any areas for improvement.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2006
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Blood Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2011
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Cellular Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2011
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2011
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Infection Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2011
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Blood Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Cellular Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Genetic Science)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2018

Practice (Infection Science)					
BSc (Hons) in Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) in Paramedic Science and Out of Hospital Care	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/04/2018
BSc (Hons) in Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Accelerated)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2022
Diploma in Higher Education Paramedic Practice	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/04/2016
Enhanced Prescribing for health professionals	PT (Part time)			Independent prescribing	01/06/2020
Prescribing for Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Independent prescribing	01/07/2020