

## Performance review process report – Queen Margaret University, 2020-21

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### Executive summary

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

This a report on the performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programmes detailed in this report continue to meet our Standards of Education and Training (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding Institute of Biomedical Science and its programmes’ 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 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

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

## The performance review process

Once an institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- Regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations
- Assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

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

## Provider and institution context

The education provider currently delivers 53 HCPC-approved programmes. It is a long-standing provider of health education.

## Institution performance scoring information

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Score	Executive Comments
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	1410	1391	0.00	The score is zero because the benchmark and the actual value are closely aligned.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	4.9	4.5	0.00	These scores are zero because there is close alignment between benchmark and actual value.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	96.1	97.1	0.00	
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	N/A	N/A	TEF is available to Scottish HEIs but QMU has chosen not to participate. We can assess teaching quality via other pathways and means.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	83.47	86.68	0.05	This small positive score is because the NSS satisfaction score is higher than the expected benchmark.
HCPC AEPM cycle length	N/A	N/A	N/A	This data point is not currently available, as will be decided through this performance review exercise.
<b>Overall score</b>			1.00	This score means that we have not identified any serious risk factors through this exercise.

### The programmes considered

We considered the whole suite of HCPC-approved programmes at the education provider. They have programmes in the following professions:

- Podiatric surgery

- Independent and Supplementary Prescribing
- Arts therapists (Art Psychotherapy, Dramatherapy and Music Therapy)
- Podiatry
- Dietetics
  
- Hearing aid dispensers
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Radiographers
- Speech and language therapists
- Paramedic Science

## Quality assurance assessment

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the following broad topics:

Broad portfolio area	Specific area addressed
Institution self-reflection	Partnership arrangements
	Resourcing, including financial stability
	Academic and placement quality
	Interprofessional education
	Equality and diversity
	Horizon scanning
Thematic reflection	Impact of COVID-19
	Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods
Sector body assessment reflection	Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
	Scottish Funding Council Guidance to Institutions on Quality QAA Scotland Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF)
	Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies - For example Healthcare Improvement Scotland National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes
	Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (SPARQS) Other professional regulators / professional bodies
Profession specific reflection	Impact & learning from upcoming introduction of new programmes
	Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance
	Capacity of practice-based learning
Stakeholder feedback and actions	Service users and carers
	Learners (those engaging with an approved programme)

Practice placement educators
External examiners

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each portfolio area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information:

Gemma Howlett	Paramedic
Sarah Illingworth	Dietitian
Niall Gooch	Education Officer

We undertook thematic performance review of the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities to take assurance that the education provider is performing well against our standards:

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted and provided their feedback.
- Within their review, visitors did not identify any major risks. However, they had some questions to check for clarification. Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors determined that they would like to have a conversation with representatives of the education provider, to clarify certain matters.

Quality activity: Conversation with representatives of the education provider

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

The visitors explored the following themes as part of their quality activity:

- Institution-level strategic approach
  - How planning of learner involvement and service user and carer involvement across HCPC-registered programmes is co-ordinated and monitored.
  - The functioning of lines of accountability and responsibility for the above
- Co-ordination of audit and quality assurance
  - How information and best practice about quality and related issues is shared at the institutional level

## Quality summary

Portfolio area	How was this area met?
Partnership arrangements	<p>QMU noted within the portfolio that they have been working with a wide range of local stakeholders and partners, to deliver the practice components of their programmes. They have some longstanding partnerships and others that are more recent, and there is a defined process for assessing how well partnerships are working and adding new ones. The visitors were satisfied from the evidence they saw that all these areas were working appropriately.</p>
Resourcing, including financial stability	<p>The visitors saw evidence in the portfolio that the education provider's programmes had been well-resourced and well supported by a strategic plan at the higher levels of management. There were regular assessments of individual programme's viability and sustainability, and these were undertaken by experienced senior staff. Individual programme leads were encouraged to report on issues affecting their own programmes. The visitors considered that in this area the institution was working appropriately and did not have any concerns.</p>
Academic and placement quality	<p>The education provider submitted evidence which showed that each individual programme had means of assessing the placements which it used.</p> <p>There was evidence of service users and learners giving input via the feedback / review process, and the visitors were satisfied that this process was working as intended.</p> <p>Based on what they had viewed in the portfolio the visitors considered that performance in this area was good. They did wish to explore further how QMU as an institution approached this area and this was something picked up in quality activity. In a conversation as part of the quality activity the visitors were reassured that the institutional mechanisms in place were robust because there was specific oversight from particular individuals and clear processes.</p>
Interprofessional education	<p>The visitors could see from the evidence supplied that interprofessional education (IPE) was well embedded across all the programmes and across the faculties. There was a clear institutional strategy and philosophy for IPE and the processes for ensuring that individual programmes followed a broad institutional approach. IPE had been considered over the review period in both learner and service user feedback and the education provider showed through the portfolio that they had mechanisms for translating such feedback into action. This means that the provider is performing well in this area.</p>

<p>Equality and diversity</p>	<p>The education provider's portfolio showed that they had continued to monitor both the admissions process and the programme itself in line with the equality and diversity policies. The education provider oversight of the policies and procedures was functioning appropriately, and there was evidence of actions being taken in response to the equality and diversity policies.</p> <p>The visitors did not identify any risks in this area and they considered that the programme was performing well.</p>
<p>Horizon scanning</p>	<p>The visitors saw evidence of structures and procedures to identify and analyse changes within the education and health landscapes. For example, all programmes had changed aspects of their delivery to adapt to COVID-19, and there had been a clear effort to engage with NHS Education Scotland in order to undertake planning for increased recruitment. The visitors considered that this was good evidence for proactive horizon scanning and considered that this aspect of the programme was working well.</p>
<p>Impact of COVID-19</p>	<p>The education provider gave a clear explanation, with examples, of their response to COVID-19. It was clear in general that they had been able to mitigate risks and adapt as necessary and were performing well. Support had been in place for staff, learners and others as necessary to ensure that those with concerns or those who felt under pressure were able to access appropriate avenues. Pandemic-related issues were a standing item on agendas of relevant meetings, and there had been several discussions and reviews of how QMU were meeting the challenges. This meant that the visitors were satisfied that the programme was performing well.</p>
<p>Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods</p>	<p>The visitors were satisfied with the approach in this area. The portfolio gave clear evidence that the education provider were closely involved in developing new ways of working and teaching, and that they were investing in new technology.</p> <p>For example, they had been making use of new software for monitoring practice-based learning and for remote submission of work. This was especially useful as part of the COVID-19 adaptation.</p> <p>The visitors considered that this was appropriate and did not identify any risks in this area.</p>
<p>Sector body assessment reflection</p>	<p>The education provider gave a clear account of how they had integrated and benchmarked their internal quality assessments with external standards. This included alignment with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and the Scottish Funding Council's Guidance on Quality and the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). Evidence was provided of</p>

	<p>adherence to the relevant codes and discussion of, and reference to, them in relevant committees.</p> <p>Similarly there was good evidence that the education provider had acted on feedback from external mechanisms for gathering learner views.</p> <p>The visitors were satisfied that performance in this area was good and appropriate to the institutional aims.</p>
Impact & learning from upcoming introduction of new programmes	<p>This specific area was addressed in the portfolio. The visitors saw evidence that within the review period the internal mechanisms for assessing the need for new programmes, and for considering, reviewing, and approving them had functioned as planned. There was an established process for subject leads to raise the need for additional provision, and there were clear processes for assessing the impacts of such new provision on the wider institution, which had been followed.</p> <p>The visitors also saw evidence of ongoing discussion of new programmes after their introduction, which made learning opportunities available.</p> <p>They considered that the processes for ensuring that new programmes were introduced appropriately and effectively were working well.</p>
Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance	<p>The education provider submitted evidence showing that programmes had used their internal audit and review process to incorporate the latest professional expectations. Discussion of such changes was a standing item on the agendas for both programme level and School-level committees.</p> <p>This showed that development in response to appropriate guidance was part of institutional structures, and the visitors therefore considered that the institution was performing well in this area.</p>
Capacity of practice-based learning	<p>Within the portfolio there was clear evidence that at both the programme and institutional level there were mechanisms for monitoring the functioning of practice-based learning. Documentation was provided showing regular discussion of the subject at appropriate meetings and concrete examples of programme staff raising the issue of capacity and their concerns being addressed. There were good channels of communication in place with placement partners and it was shown that these channels were being used. The visitors considered that performance was good in this area.</p>
Service users and carers	<p>The portfolio showed that over the review period the involvement of service users and carers was working as planned, with service users and carers involved across all aspects of the relevant</p>

	<p>programmes. For example, they were used in teaching activities, admissions, curriculum development and practice-based learning. Their involvement had been discussed and reviewed at regular intervals, and changed in response to feedback. The education provider was willing and able to adapt in how they worked with service users and carers.</p> <p>Consequently the visitors considered that performance in this area was good.</p>
Learners (those engaging with an approved programme)	<p>In the portfolio the education provider gave examples of how they had made changes in response to feedback from learners. They showed that there were established mechanisms for obtaining and applying this feedback, and that learners had been made aware of these as part of standard admissions and induction processes. As noted above there was involvement with external mechanisms for gaining learner feedback and views.</p> <p>The visitors therefor considered that performance in this area was good.</p>
Practice placement educators	<p>In the portfolio the education provider laid out how they have been working with practice educators. This includes training and development opportunities as well as the normal procedures for selection and placement. At both institution and programme level there were clear mechanisms for ensuring that practice educators were appropriate for their roles. There was evidence of practice educators being upskilled and developed in the portfolio.</p> <p>The visitors were satisfied with this, as it showed a willingness to adapt and improve ways of working with practice educators. They considered that performance was good, and did not identify any associated risks.</p>
External examiners	<p>In the portfolio the education provider showed that they had structured relationships with external examiners, including institutional policies for appointment and monitoring. They provided evidence of external examiners' work in overseeing programmes and of changes that had been made in response to external examiner feedback, for example changing the balance of assessment on some of the programmes.</p> <p>The visitors considered that there were no concerns with performance in this area, because clear engagement with the external examiner role, and responsiveness to feedback, had been demonstrated.</p>

## Risks

The visitors did not identify any outstanding risks at the education provider.

## Best practice

The visitors identified the following areas of good practice:

- QMU have excellent institutional mechanisms for practice educator development, and service user and carer involvement.
- QMU have a strong culture of using feedback well, from both external and internal mechanisms.
- QMU adapted well to the COVID-19 pandemic, using technology well and keeping closely in touch with the needs of staff and learners.
- QMU are highly proactive and imaginative in the area of horizon scanning.

## Recommendation

The visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

- The institution and its programmes should remain approved
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in five years (the 2025-26 academic year)

Following documentary review and quality activity, the visitors were satisfied across the areas reflected upon in the portfolio submission. There were no major risks to the education provider's approach to meeting the standards, which indicates adherence to standards and performance above our regulatory threshold.

## Decision

### 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](#).

### Decision on approval

We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 30 January 2022.