

Approval process report

University of Lincoln, Speech and Language Therapy, 2021-22

Executive summary

This report covers our approval review of the proposed programme offered by Lincoln University. During this review two recommendations was made regarding the education provider auditing processes of practice placements, and learners' accessibility to speech and language therapy assessment materials. This has been highlighted for review in their next performance review. The programme is proposed to open to their first cohort of learners on the 30th of January 2023. The education provider has supplied appropriate evidence the proposed programme meets all relevant standards, therefore our recommendation is for programme approval.

This report will now be considered by our Education and Training Panel who will make the final decision on the on the review period.

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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 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, if 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. 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:

Lucy Myers	Lead visitor, Speech and language therapist
Paula Charlesworth	Lead visitor, Dietitian
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer
Sophie Bray	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers six HCPC-approved programmes across five professions. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2005.

The education provider has not interacted with our processes since January 2020, when they submitted a major change for the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, full time programme. It was assessed by visitors, and they considered the programme continued to meet the SETs.

Practice Education Providers from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cambridgeshire, and Leicestershire have contributed to the design of the programme through a series of initial meetings in December 21 – January 22.

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	Occupational therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2019
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Physiotherapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2005
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2021

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	200	150	2022	The enrolled numbers of learners across all HCPC approved provision is lower than the approved intended numbers we have on our record. The education provider evaluates learner numbers against available resources and makes appropriate decisions, and we are satisfied which they have justified their learner intake whilst ensuring sustainability of provision.

Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	4%	2021	The percentage of learners not continuing is more than the benchmark which implies learners are generally satisfied with their studies but there is potential for work to be done to improve this.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	91%	2021	The percentage in employment or further study is 2% less than the benchmark at the education provider which implies learners who successfully complete their learning at this institution are slightly less likely than the sector benchmark to be in employment after completing the programme.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	n/a	Gold	2021	A gold award indicates the institution is doing well. This shows they are consistently deliver outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for their learners.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	74.5%	95.5%	2021	This score indicates the percentage of learners who are satisfied with their learning at this institution is higher than average. This implies the institution is performing well.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated 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 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 –**
 - The education provider will use the school's Admissions Guidance 2021 for the Speech and Language Therapy programme. It builds on the education provider's admissions policies to include the professional requirements of the programmes within the school. It provides guidance to all admissions onto the pre-registration programmes

(undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeships) in the school. It links to the school's website where details of each programme are available to prospective learners. It is reviewed annually by the school Teaching Leadership Team.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The education provider's Admissions Guidance 2021 outlines how professional body or regulatory requirements may require a different level of English language comprehension on completion of the programme. Therefore, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) requirement for entry to the proposed programme will be higher compared with others due to the specific speech and language therapy programme requirements.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The education provider will use their institutional wide policy, University of Lincoln Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy (2018). This policy is set at institutional level with minor amendments where professional requirements mandate. This policy functions as the standard for accreditation and approval. It also functions as the standard for accreditation of certified learning and accreditation of experiential learning.
 - The proposed programme will also use school level School of Health and Social Care Admissions guidance 2021 which articulates the programme specific modifications from the institution wide policy.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - All staff involved in recruitment interviews are required to undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training and unconscious bias training. All academic staff in the school are involved in interviews for their programmes. For programmes with very high application numbers there is support from other programme teams to ensure timely responses. Service users are used as well, and they have undertaken training.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

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 –**
 - The education provider is registered with the Office for Students (OfS) which is an independent public body. They report to Parliament through the Department for Education (DfE). Registration with OfS ensures the education provider has the power to award degrees and university titles to learners, enabling learners suitable qualifications to enter the Register.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The education provider uses its University Programme Oversight Group to assess all proposed programmes to ensure consideration of finance, IT, planning, marketing, library resources, careers, business and academic risk, estates. The proposed programme has been scrutinised and approved for development by this group.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - The school is part of the College of Social Science and reports through programme leads, associate professors, deputies, and the head of school. Examples of the quality assurance tools which will be used to ensure effective programme delivery include continuous programme monitoring, programme health and performance monitoring, periodic academic review, and postgraduate taught experience survey.
 - These mechanisms ensure there are appropriate staff in place to enable effective programme delivery, and the education provider has put effective monitoring and reviews in place to ensure ongoing sustainability.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - The education provider will provide annual performance review and development planning which all staff involved in the programme will be required to participate. School programme staff will be provided with appropriate support when completing the PGCert Health Professions Education.
 - There is also a funded Academic Professional Apprenticeship which staff can complete. This is a work-based learning programme designed to equip new academics with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need for working in the Higher Education sector. The apprenticeship offers a development opportunity for new academic staff and has been designed to support the education provider's commitment to teaching excellence and great learner experience.

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

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - The education provider has an academic partnerships quality assurance manual which outlines their processes for partnership approval, monitoring, and review. Their office for quality, standards and partnerships manages this institutional policy.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - This University Office is responsible to the Academic Board through the Academic Affairs Committee for the assurance and enhancement of the quality and standards of the Universities programmes and awards. The school is part of the College of Social Science and reports through programme leads, associate professors, deputies, and the head of school. The programme will apply continuous programme monitoring, programme health and performance monitoring, periodic academic review, and postgraduate taught experience survey as quality assurance tools.
 - The education provider ensures academic quality by putting appropriate staff in place to deliver the programmes and monitoring the programmes over time to ensure they are sustaining high quality.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - The education provider has processes in place for placement allocation and completion. School level processes outline the expectations of both learners and practice learning hub in relation to practice learning.
 - The education provider has processes in place for learners to raise concerns. These include Academic Complaints, Raising Concerns Process and Guidance, Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosures) Policy and Problem Resolution Protocol Regular audits of placement providers are undertaken to ensure placement providers align to the schools' processes and they have appropriate safe and supportive environments for learners. Practice educators are required to undertake training, and this will be facilitated by the education provider.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement –**

- Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching (LALT) oversees digital education, learner engagement and learner experience for the education provider. The members of LALT collaborate and participate in themes and projects to actively support teaching practice. LALT administers module evaluations which are delivered electronically at the end of each module.
- There are also subject committee meetings each semester which involves the programme team, learner representatives, the appropriate Associate Professor or Deputy Head of School, the subject librarian, and a representative from the practice placement hub. These meetings gather feedback from the learner representatives and feeds forward any potential updates or changes the representatives will be asked to feedback to the wider learner body for consultation.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
 - The Together Group is a diverse patient and public involvement group who work with the school across the provision. They are involved with programme and curriculum design.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - The education provider's Fitness to Study Policy 2016 will provide support offered by personal tutors and the education provider's learner wellbeing service. The Raising concerns process and guidance, and problem resolution protocol provide school-level support. The education provider's learner services and academic complaints process are both institution wide processes.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - Learners will be subject to university led Fitness to Practise processes in line with the school policy as outlined in the general regulations. As mentioned above, the provider has processes in place for raising concerns, whistleblowing and problem resolution.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**

- The school delivers four other pre-registration MSc programmes. All these programmes have a 30 credit interprofessional module and a further 30 credits as shared modules.
- The proposed programme includes an Essential Interprofessional Practice module worth 15 credits.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The education provider uses institution wide policies covering inclusive practice, equality and diversity. They hold the Race Equality Charter bronze award, Advance HE's race equality charter to improve the representation, progression and success of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff and learners within higher education. They are one of only 21 UK institutions to hold this award which they are using as a platform to continue to improve.
 - The school holds an Athena Swan Bronze award, which recognises work undertaken to address gender equality. Six of their Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) Schools hold Bronze awards, their first Silver Award was achieved in 2019 through the School of Psychology. All Schools across the University are now engaged in the Athena Swan process, working towards improving.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - The Office for Quality, Standards and Partnerships is a university office which ensures the quality of assessment through validation, external examiners, and continuous programme monitoring. The post graduate taught regulations will be applied with some programme specific variations to meet professional statutory regulatory body and professional requirements. These are the variations which are agreed for the current HCPC pre-registration MSc programmes. The education provider suggests the variations for the proposed provision will be very similar.
 - Learners must satisfactorily complete and pass all elements of assessment for each module with a minimum mark of 50% to meet the requirements of the regulatory body. Learners have a maximum of one in-year resit opportunity, those failing to meet the pass requirement after a resit will be transferred to the appropriate exit award. This is in line with the education provider's general pass standard, where the credits for the award are as follows:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Human Communication Science (60 credits), and
- Postgraduate Diploma in Human Communication Science (120 credits).
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - The education provider’s Student Engagement and Participation Policy includes monitoring of learners at school level. The post graduate taught regulations will be applied with some programme specific variations to meet professional statutory regulatory body and professional requirements. They have outlined the pass requirements for learners, and the process for failure to meet requirements.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals –**
 - The education provider and learners will have institution wide policies available to them. These include:
 - Student appeals policy
 - Student complaints policy
 - Academic offences
 - Student conduct
 - These can be accessed through the University of Lincoln Student Services which provide services for disputing grades and hold a review and appeals process.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

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

MSc Speech and Language Therapy	Full time accelerated	Speech and language therapy	30 learners per year, one cohort per year	30 January 2023
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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. 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.

We sought out clarification on each quality theme via email communication to allow the education provider to elaborate on previous information they had sent or send further evidence documents to answer the queries.

Quality theme 1 – Collaboration with stakeholders

Area for further exploration: In their portfolio, the education provider has outlined the network of individuals, NHS partners, service users and organisations they work with who will form the Curriculum Development Group. We explored the education provider's approach to working with these stakeholders. We wanted to explore the mechanisms which will be used to inform development, deliver, evaluation and review of the programme. We wanted to understand how comprehensive this will be and if it will enable the curriculum to remain relevant to current practice.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider has stated that stakeholders will be involved through contributing to module content and developing practice learning. Once the programme starts, they will involve partner organisations to contribute in the same way as for other programmes in the MSc Suite, in an annual committee who produce an improvement plan, and a practice educator forum twice a year. There will be a period review every five years. The education provider has indicated regular collaboration at a range of levels, and the additional details provided about the mechanisms for ensuring the programme remains relevant. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 2 – Processes to ensure and maintain practice-based learning opportunities

Area for further exploration: The education provider has a Practice Education hub to manage practice learning opportunities. They have already established

relationships with local service providers and are developing new relationships through contact with services in healthcare and the independent sector. It is not clear what processes are in place to ensure availability and capacity of future placements, and how variations in learner recruitment will be addressed in relation to placement availability. We explored how the education provider will ensure placement needs will be met for all learners, and further detail on how these will be managed in terms of service levels, quotas and competition with other providers for placements. This is important to guarantee the education provider can sustain placement opportunities for learners despite changes may occur with competing programmes or an unexpected shortfall of placements.

Outcomes of exploration: The visitors reviewed documentation of the education provider's processes for ensuring availability, capacity and scope of their practice placements, including their school level processes. These outlined the service level offers which are made with placements, as well as the education provider's strategy for ensuring future placements are available for learners. They are adopting the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' suggestions of a quota of 25 days practice education per full time registered speech and language therapist (SLT). Their largest partner organisation (Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust) has already shown support to adopt this quota.

Due to their geographical distance from other education providers offering the same programme, the education provider doesn't predict competition for placement opportunities. The Programme Lead has joined and contributed to the HEI networks within the profession and established early, collaborative relationships. Their Practice Learning Hub is working to secure placements in the local area for their learners. Early conversations have delivered assurances from practice-based placements that sufficient placement sessions / hours will be available across the breadth and depth of the profession. They are working to formalise these offers through signed practice placement agreements which are signed in perpetuity to secure the placement areas. The placements will then be regularly audited to ensure they meet educational standards and deliver a quality learning experience for our students.

We are satisfied the ongoing monitoring of placement quality and capacity will ensure learners have the appropriate placement opportunities. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns. The visitors have made a recommendation regarding auditing processes to ensure effective collaboration which can be viewed [here](#).

Quality theme 3 – Ensuring suitability of practice educators

Area for further exploration: Training is provided to partner organisations, who are required to have HCPC registration in the relevant profession and post qualification experience for them to become practice educators. The visitors explored the processes in place for ensuring practice educators have the relevant experience and knowledge to hold this position on enrichment placements, as this was not clear. Enrichment placements are offered on the programme to learners as extra opportunities for practice-based placements. They are not assessed in the same way, as they are not a compulsory part of the programme. This information would

help the education provider be assured practice educators are suitably qualified in a role relevant to supporting learners. It is important for learners to be suitably supported and have a safe and effective environment which should be established through appropriately trained and qualified practice educators.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider has provided an amended enrichment process document which outlines the processes in place for ensuring learner and client safety. It outlines the practice educator's role in supporting the learners and clients. The ratio of learners to practice educators on placements is dependent on the placement setting, however never exceeds one practice educator to four learners. This low ratio ensures all learners can have appropriate feedback, observations and support during their placement.

The education provider plans to work in partnership with their practice colleagues to develop and deliver educator training and maintain a register of local practice educators via their Placement Management System (PEMS). This will ensure they can keep a record of practice educators and their qualifications and training. The visitors were satisfied the revised documents provided regarding enrichment placements appropriately outlines the support available for learners and ensures learner and client safety are paramount. The responsibilities and methods of communication between learners, placements and education provider are clearly outlined. The visitors were satisfied the response and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 4 – Number of appropriately qualified staff

Area for further exploration: The visitors explored the qualifications and experience of the staff who are to be recruited. The visitors enquired how the education provider ensures they have an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff for effective programme delivery to make sure the increased learner intake can be managed within capacity. We did this through requesting more information the expectations in terms of qualifications and experience of staff to be recruited.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider has outlined the extra staff which have been recruited, with details on their capacity and qualifications on employment. They have given information showing appropriate staff to student ratios. They have supported these staff with further validation. They plan to employ a staff member in February 2023 and will use current Associate Lecturers to support any current gaps in expertise. All lecturers are required to have, or to be committed to studying toward, post registration teaching qualification as a minimum.

Plans for recruitment of substantive staff are clear and the education provider has clearly considered the range of experience required with consideration of training for teaching and learning. They have committed to funding associate lecturers to support gaps in expertise. The education provider has updated all programme handbooks to map all internal and external teaching staff against their modules, to provide clarity of teaching and staffing structure. We were satisfied the education provider has taken the necessary steps to ensure they have sufficient and appropriately trained staff in place.

Quality theme 5 – Resourcing for the programme

Area for further exploration: The outline of funding for equipment provided suggested there will be adequate resources available to learners, shared across several programmes run at the institution. We explored how learner's access to these resources will be managed to ensure they are effective and appropriate to the programme delivery. The visitors wanted to understand how the education provider will ensure resources are effective and appropriate to delivery of the programme. It is important all learners have suitable access to resources to ensure they can become familiar with equipment before using this on placements and after course completion.

Outcomes of exploration: There has been extensive refurbishment to the school simulation and clinical suites, with a specific area identified for SLT simulated learning. They are also building a virtual reality suite which will be available for all programmes to use. The education provider has outlined the equipment which has been ordered for year one and indicated their intentions for equipment in year two. They identified adult clinical equipment will be determined by the lead lecturer, who is yet to be appointed. The visitors were satisfied this planning is suitable and appropriate to ensure programme delivery. Learners will have access to all equipment, as supervised by a member of staff, to ensure appropriate access and usage. The visitors were satisfied there are suitable resources available to learners to support learning and delivery of the programme. The visitors have made a recommendation regarding access to speech and language therapy assessment materials which can be viewed [here](#).

Quality theme 6 – Delivery of the standards of proficiency

Area for further exploration: The education provider had broadly mapped each module against the HCPC Standards of Proficiency (SOPs). The expectations of learners and of professional behaviour including the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics are embedded in two modules in Years 1 and 2. We explored how the modules will be taught and learning strategies delivered to ensure learning objectives are met, so learners meet each standard. There was a lack of documentation provided to evidence this. The implementation of learning is important to enable each learner to successfully demonstrate and achieve each standard.

Outcomes of exploration: The module handbooks were provided to supplement information provided in module specifications. This provided evidence of full coverage of the standards of proficiency. The education provider is limited in the information they are allowed to share with regards to specific teaching and learning strategies, however they provided the module handbooks for three modules which contained further detail around how each Standard of Education and Training is met, which the visitors were satisfied provided suitable evidence to support the education provider meeting threshold for this standard. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 7 – Structure of module delivery

Area for further exploration: The education provider has mapped their module content and learning outcomes against the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) curriculum guidance. The visitors explored how taught and self-directed hours are distributed to get a better gauge of the depth of teaching within modules. The visitors asked about this because it was unclear how teaching and learning was organised and weighted throughout the programme, and therefore we were unable to get a clear idea if the content was appropriately meeting learners needs.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider included the additional details of teaching hours within the module handbooks, which showed how the content will be organised and weighted. Contact teaching hours account for three days per week, each consisting of six hours comprising of a combination of lectures, seminars, workshops and practical teaching. This more in-depth detail about the breakdown of content of modules with relation to teaching duration satisfied us the programme is reflecting a suitable knowledge base in the curriculum. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 8 – Embedding research methods across the programme

Area for further exploration: From the programme handbook specification and mapping programme learning outcomes provided with the portfolio. It was unclear how Research Methods are embedded into the programme. The evidence provided lacked details and clarity on the overall involvement of research techniques throughout learning. The visitors explored how research methods are embedded into the programme and what this included to ensure they are underpinning knowledge as opposed to being a smaller project.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider has amended the module handbooks to ensure there are explicit mentions of research appraisal skills and research based learned threaded into modules. This has ensured expectations and coverage have been made clearer and incorporated through the programme. The module in year two will develop and improve skills of independent enquiry and practice-focussed research. It supports learners to develop an understanding of a range of research approaches. These can be used to address research questions allowing them to develop an evidence-based approach to their practice. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 9 – Integration of theory and practice

Area for further exploration: Modules show integration of theory and practice throughout the programme but it is broadly outlined. The visitors explored how theory will be incorporated into practice and how the learning and teaching strategy and methods link to the learning outcomes. This is important to ensure the education provider is embedding these factors within the curriculum so learners can achieve the standards.

Outcomes of exploration: Practice based assessment documents were provided to show how theory and practice is integrated in the teaching of these modules. The

education provider also included additional detail in the module handbooks which gave details about the learning and teaching approaches. The visitors were satisfied with the additional details this integration is embedded into the curriculum for learners and learning outcomes can be clearly linked to learning and teaching strategies. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 10 – Review of assessment methods

Area for further exploration: There are variations in detail of assessment methods throughout the initial portfolio and document submission. Module SPL9005M shows an exemplary level of detail which the visitors would like to see reflected throughout the submission. The visitors explored how the education provider ensures assessments in each module aligns to the learning objectives, leading to effective assessment. It is important to check assessments are reflective of module content and ensure they are appropriately assessing learner's ability to achieve learning objectives and achieve the standards.

Outcomes of exploration: Module handbooks were provided for the other modules with additional information outlining the assessment methods in more detail. This evidence indicates there is a range of authentic assessment tasks across modules which will appropriately assess the learning outcomes. The visitors agreed the added detail to the module handbooks provided for their review showed how assessment is aligning to learning objectives. They could clearly see learners will be assessed for competency for each appropriate area of the module, giving them confidence assessment methods are appropriate. The visitors were satisfied the response, and outcome of this quality activity addressed their concerns.

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. 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 criteria are set at appropriate levels for a Masters level programme, and include applicants evidencing a minimum of a second class honours in their first degree. Appropriate admissions screening tools are in place and there is an admissions handbook which outlines requirements for learners.
 - The visitors saw sufficient evidence to determine that selection and entry criteria would allow learners to be able to meet our standards for registration upon successful completion of the programme.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
 - There was evidence of collaboration at programme level with various stakeholders. These include partners from NHS and Independent sector SLT providers, service user representatives and organisations. This was explored in [quality theme 1](#).
 - There are existing relationships with practice placements, and further placements being established to ensure they can maintain placement capacity for each cohort of learners on the programme. This was explored in [quality theme 2](#).
 - Evidence of sufficient numbers of appropriately trained teaching staff was demonstrated through [quality activity 4](#). This show the programme will be adequately staffed and the staff have the right knowledge and expertise to deliver the programme effectively.
 - In addition to other resources, there was clear evidence of simulated learning opportunities and virtual learning environments which would be available to learners and educators on the programme. There has been an investment in library resources explored in [quality theme 5](#).
 - The visitors saw sufficient evidence which demonstrated the design and delivery of the programme. This would allow learners who complete the programme, meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills and fit for practise.
 - The visitors therefore considered standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
 - Learning outcomes have embedded expectations of learners becoming professionals into the modules and placements, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The programme ensures graduates understand the expectations and responsibilities associated with being a regulated professional. This was explored in [quality activity 6](#).

- We explored the taught hours of modules to be assured learners are receiving support through the depth of modules allows them to achieve learning objectives and standards through [quality activity 7](#).
 - The programme content and curriculum has input from and is regularly reviewed by a large range of professionals and stakeholders.
 - Teaching and learning techniques, along side integration of theory and practice into the curriculum were explored through [quality theme 9](#).the visitors received further detail as to how learning objectives are achieved and integrated into the programme, assuring us this appropriately meets the standard threshold.
 - The visitors saw sufficient evidence which demonstrated the design and delivery of the programme is such which would allow learners who complete the programme, meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills and fit for practise.
 - The visitors therefore considered standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - The structure and duration of practice-based learning as well as the types of placements demonstrate learners can achieve the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency for speech and language therapists.
 - There are suitable mechanisms in place to ensure learners will be taught by an appropriate number of qualified staff to support safe and effective learning.
 - The visitors were satisfied practice-based learning is a central part of the programme and there are effective systems and processes in place to support its delivery.
 - The visitors therefore considered standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
 - The assessment strategy is designed to help learners to be able to demonstrate they have gained the necessary competencies and essential skills to be eligible on completion of the programme to apply onto the Register as a speech and language therapists. This was explored in more detail in [quality theme 10](#).
 - The expectations and assessment of professional behaviours, including the standards of conduct and performance and ethics, is embedded throughout the programme.
 - A range of assessment tools are utilised across the programme, which reflect the development of the different nature and levels of professional knowledge and skills required for practice as a speech and language therapist, which are delivered across the curriculum.
 - The visitors saw sufficient evidence which demonstrated that standards within the SET area are met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:

- The visitors noted the education provider has demonstrated how the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning supports the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency (SET 5.2) well through examples and mapping documents.

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.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommended the introduction of a formal process to ensure regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Reason: The education provider shows there is regular collaboration with placement providers are a range of levels. They have reflected on intended collaboration moving forward, however the visitors suggested introducing a process to ensure effective monitoring of the process to ensure it is working effectively.

The education provider agreed with this recommendation after discussions between the education provider and the visitors and are happy to look at addressing this in the future. The standard has been met, and the visitors are happy with the processes in place currently. It was suggested and agreed the education provider would reflect upon this recommendation in their next performance review (2022-23)

SET 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 recommended ongoing review of a more in-depth process of collaborating with and securing placements to ensure placement capacity is effectively monitored and maintained.

Reason: There is evidence of the programme meeting placement capacity requirements for this programme, however limited evidence of processes to confirm and ensure increased capacity when needed. By organising meetings prior to placements being needed and having set key points to collaborate with placement providers prior to admissions and during the academic year the education provider

can ensure the process is working effectively. The visitors have suggested ongoing monitoring of this process to ensure that the programme can adapt to changes in learner numbers, resulting in increased placement needs. It was suggested and agreed the education provider would reflect upon this recommendation in their next performance review (2022-23)

SET 3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Recommendation: The visitors recommended ongoing review of learners' access to some of the speech and language therapy assessment materials to ensure most appropriate delivery of the programme and best preparation of learners for employment.

Reason: The education provider is in the initial stages of ordering equipment and ensuring its accessibility for learners. Various equipment is shared between programmes, and therefore stored in a shared faculty. Due to the delicacy and costs of some equipment, access to these resources must be monitored by a member of staff, requiring permission for access to be granted when learners want to assess speech and language therapy assessment materials. This access is appropriate and still ensures the standard is met at threshold.

The visitors have suggested reviewing these access arrangements as the programme develops, with the potential for some of the speech and language therapy assessment materials to be made accessible to learners on a less supervised level. This would ensure that learners have open access to these materials and can become familiar with them before using them in placements/employment. It was suggested and agreed the education provider would reflect upon this recommendation in their next performance review (2022-23)

SET 4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.

Recommendation: The visitors recommended ongoing monitoring of how research appraisal skills are threaded throughout the programme to ensure learners receive suitable evidence-based practice.

Reason: Although the visitors were satisfied there is the intention for research appraisal skills to be threaded throughout the programme, the education provider agreed that this is something they aim to continue to improve. The visitors suggested monitoring whether the approach of threading research appraisal skills throughout the programme meets the programme learning outcomes 8 and 9

- 8: Critically analyse the principles and applications of scientific enquiry including the evaluation of effective intervention, innovation, and research activity.
- 9: Critically evaluate different research methodologies to interpret and apply research to practice

This ongoing monitoring will ensure that learners will get appropriate evidence-based practice and that it is directly linked to specific areas of their learning. It was suggested and agreed the education provider would reflect upon this recommendation in their next performance review (2022-23)

SET 5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: The visitors recommended further development of the processes and procedures in place to monitor enrichment placements to ensure their suitability at the same level other practice placements.

Reason: The education provider has given further detail around arrangements for enrichment placements, reassuring the visitors of their suitability and monitoring. They have suggested further developing processes in place with these placements. Despite them not being assessed placements, it is important that considerations are made regarding how any concerns around professionalism or practice might be raised and whether fitness to practice processes would be applicable in these placements. They have suggested this can be done through risk assessments and defining responsibilities in these placements. It was suggested and agreed the education provider would reflect upon this recommendation in their next performance review (2022-23)

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

During their review, the visitors made recommendations based on the outcomes of quality activities. These were discussed with the education provider, who were happy to accept the recommendations, as discussed in the section above. The education provider will have an opportunity to reflect upon these recommendations in their next performance review, which is scheduled for 2022-23.

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
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process is scheduled to be in the 2022-23 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Occupational therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2019
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Physiotherapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2018
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2005
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2021