hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Coventry University
Programme name	Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Science
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	2 – 3 July 2015

Contents

Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'paramedic' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. The education provider has until 20 August 2015 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 24 August 2015. At this meeting, the Committee will accept, reject or vary the visitors' recommended outcome. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 28 October 2015. The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Committee on the ongoing approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Committee on 10 November 2015.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HCPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider and validating body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Glyn Harding (Paramedic) Sue Boardman (Paramedic) Sid Jeewa (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	100 per cohort, 3 cohorts per year
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2015
Chair	Helen Barker (Coventry University)
Secretary	Amelia Hamson (Coventry University)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators / mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Service users and carers	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval the visitors must be satisfied that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for the relevant part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 46 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 12 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures 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.

Condition: The education provider is required to provide further evidence of the information made available to potential applicants.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that potential applicants are able to enter this programme via the 'Tech to Para' route. Prior to the visit, the visitors understood that the 'Tech to Para' route is delivered in partnership by the Coventry University, who act as the education provider and the West Midlands Ambulance Services (WMAS) acting as the 'employer'. The visitors heard during discussions with the programme team that applicants entering via the 'Tech to Para' route will be expected to be working for WMAS as technicians, and to have completed a pre – programme training delivered by the WMAS, before coming to Coventry University. In assessing the documentation, the visitors were not given any information that would be provided to potential applicants taking an offer of a place via the 'Tech to Para' route. In addition, the visitors were unsure from the discussions at what point the applicants will become students of Coventry University as applicants will complete one year's training with WMAS and then using Accreditation of Prior Experiential learning (APEL) will join the one year programme delivered by the education provider. The visitors, therefore, require documentation detailing both the admissions procedures and the underpinning course programme for the Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Science. In this way, both the education provider and the applicant can have the necessary information to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme. This condition is linked to other standards in SET 2.

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding any language requirements.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that potential applicants are able to enter this programme via the 'Tech to Para' route. Prior to the visit, the visitors understood that the 'Tech to Para' route is delivered in partnership by the Coventry University, who act as the education provider and the West Midlands Ambulance Services (WMAS) acting as the 'employer'. The visitors heard during discussions with the programme team that applicants entering via the 'Tech to Para' route will be expected to be working for WMAS as technicians, and to have completed a pre – programme training delivered by the WMAS, before coming to Coventry University. In assessing the documentation the visitors were unable to find any information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding any language requirements. The visitors were provided with additional information around admission procedures during the visit, but due to time constraints, they were unable to review these. As such, the visitors were unclear what the admission procedures for this programme is and how these procedures provide the education provider with the information they require as part of the process to offer an applicant a place on the

programme. Therefore the education provider must provide further evidence regarding the admissions procedure for this programme and how the education provider ensures that successful applicants meet the relevant requirements, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure to detail how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that potential applicants are able to enter this programme via the 'Tech to Para' route. Prior to the visit, the visitors understood that the 'Tech to Para' route is delivered in partnership by the Coventry University, who act as the education provider and the West Midlands Ambulance Services (WMAS) acting as the 'employer'. The visitors heard during discussions with the programme team that applicants entering via the 'Tech to Para' route will be expected to be working for WMAS as technicians, and to have completed a pre – programme training delivered by the WMAS, before coming to Coventry University. In assessing the documentation the visitors were unable to find any information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding criminal conviction checks. The visitors were provided with additional information around admission procedures during the visit, but due to time constraints, they were unable to review these. As such, the visitors could not determine how the procedures of WMAS will work with those of the education provider, and how any issues that may arise would be dealt with by the education provider to ensure that they are dealt with consistently to determine if any issue arising would prevent an applicant form completing the programme. In particular the visitors could not determine who makes the final decision about accepting a student onto this programme if any issue does arise as the information provided at the visit articulated that applicants would have already employed by WMAS. Therefore the visitors require further information about the DBS checks that are applied at the point of admission for this programme. In particular the visitors require further evidence of how WMAS's processes would work with the education provider's process, and clarification of who makes the final decision about accepting an applicant onto the programme if an issue arises.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure to detail how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's health requirements.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that potential applicants are able to enter this programme via the 'Tech to Para' route. Prior to the visit, the visitors understood that the 'Tech to Para' route is delivered in partnership by the Coventry University, who act as the education provider and the West Midlands Ambulance Services (WMAS) acting as the 'employer'. The visitors heard during discussions with the programme team that applicants entering via the 'Tech to Para' route will be expected to be working for WMAS as technicians, and to have completed a

pre – programme training delivered by the WMAS, before coming to Coventry University. In assessing the documentation the visitors were unable to find any information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding health requirements. The visitors were provided with additional information around admission procedures during the visit, but due to time constraints, they were unable to review these. As such, the visitors could not determine how the education provider's own procedures to apply health checks, will work with WMAS. Nor could the visitors determine how the education provider will identify what adjustments could or could not reasonably be made if health conditions were disclosed, and how any issues that may arise would be dealt with consistently, since applicants would have already been accepted onto the training employment programme delivered by WMAS. In particular the visitors could not determine who makes the final decision about accepting a student onto the programme if adjustments would be required. Therefore the visitors require further information about how the health declarations that are applied at the point of admission to this programme are used by the education provider to determine if a student can take up a place on this programme. In particular the visitors require clarification of who makes the final decision about accepting an applicant onto the programme if adjustments are required, at the point of entry onto this programme.

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that potential applicants are able to enter this programme via the 'Tech to Para' route. Prior to the visit, the visitors understood that the 'Tech to Para' route is delivered in partnership by the Coventry University, who act as the education provider and the West Midlands Ambulance Services (WMAS) acting as the 'employer'. The visitors heard during discussions with the programme team that applicants entering via the 'Tech to Para' route will be expected to be working for WMAS as technicians, and to have completed a pre – programme training delivered by the WMAS, before coming to Coventry University. In assessing the documentation the visitors were unable to find any information about the admissions procedure or the underpinning "technician" course for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards. The visitors were provided with additional information around admission procedures during the visit, but due to time constraints, they were unable to review these. As such the visitors, were unsure how the education provider, working with the employer, could apply selection and entry criteria for the programme, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards. Therefore the education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it, as the education provider, ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how the admissions procedure for this programme applies selection and entry criteria including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that potential applicants are able to enter this programme via the 'Tech to Para' route. Prior to the visit, the visitors understood that the 'Tech to Para' route is delivered in partnership by the Coventry University, who act as the education provider and the West Midlands Ambulance Services (WMAS) acting as the 'employer'. The visitors heard during discussions with the programme team that applicants entering via the 'Tech to Para' route will be expected to be working for WMAS as technicians, and to have completed a pre – programme training delivered by the WMAS (stated as equivalent to 120 points at level 4), before coming to Coventry University. In assessing the documentation the visitors were not presented with WMAS selection criteria for employment with the trust. As such, the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider ensures that appropriate accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms will be applied as part of the entry criteria. From the discussions at the visit, it was clear that WMAS will manage the academic and professional selection and entry criteria for employment and therefore this would act as the entry criteria for the programme. From the discussions, the visitors could not determine how Coventry, as the education provider, ensures that appropriate accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms are being applied and how any decisions to offer a place on the programme would be managed based on these mechanisms. The visitors did not see any overarching policies, systems and procedures for managing WMAS approach to academic and professional selection and entry criteria. As such, the visitors were unsure how the education provider, working with the employer, could apply selection and entry criteria for the programme, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms. Therefore the education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it, as the education provider, ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements, through the use of appropriate accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure for this programme and how it ensures that it applies selection and entry criteria including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) and other inclusion mechanisms.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the documentation submitted indicated that the education provider would be involved in the training delivered in students' first year of employment at WMAS and that subsequently the students would be admitted to the education provider as students in accordance with Coventry's AP(E)L policy to study the second year of the programme. As such the visitors were clear that the in-work-training that a student would undergo in their first year of employment would attract the equivalent of 120 academic credits at level 4 of an undergraduate degree and that are required by students who wish to start the second year at level 5. However, during the course of the

visit, the visitors learnt that the education provider would not have any role in delivering the training to potential students in the first year of employment at WMAS and instead would be responsible for a one year programme of study at level 5 for any of these potential students who successfully completed their year of training at WMAS. As such the programme subject to this approval would only be the one year programme at the education provider and will not include the previous year's training at the employer.

During discussions with the programme team, the visitor learnt that all applicants would be assessed by completing 175 hours at practice and an online care and compassion course. As such, students are awarded "Advance Standing" for 120 credits at level 1 in recognition of technician qualifications / experience.

However, the visitors were not provided with any information on the content of the online course, what the 170 hour should consist of or what mapping exercise was done to award these students 120 credits. As such, the visitors were unable to see how the AP(E)L process would be implemented to ensure that applicants from WMAS would have undertaken training equivalent to that of a full year of undergraduate study. In particular the visitors could not identify how the education provider could ensure that anyone admitted to the programme through this process would have met the required learning outcomes associated with the training programme at WMAS. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the AP(E)L process that will be implemented by the education provider. This evidence should demonstrate how Coventry, as the education provider, will ensure that prospective students will be consistently judged to determine how they have met the required learning outcomes for successful application to this programme, equivalent to those of a first year undergraduate degree.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the appropriate protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users in practical sessions.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the standards of education and training (SETs) mapping document provided prior to the visit and noted that consent to participate in role-play will be discussed with students verbally and written consent is gained for use of photographic images or video footage. Through discussions with the students, the visitors learnt that students were aware that role play was part of the taught element of this programme. However, the visitors noted that there was some confusion among the students regarding giving consent. Discussions with programme team revealed that other HCPC approved programmes, delivered by the education provider, have a consent form which students are asked to sign. The visitors were told that the programme team are intending on introducing a similar protocol in September but were not provided with any evidence of what the consent form would consist of. As such the visitors could not determine how students were informed about the requirement for them to participate in this form of teaching and how records were maintained to indicate consent had been gained. Also the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, how situations where students declined to participate were managed and what alternative learning arrangements would be provided to ensure that there was no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of the formal protocols that are in place to obtain informed consent.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to identify where attendance is mandatory, where students are informed of this within the programme documentation and how attendance is monitored across all elements of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors could not identify what the attendance requirements for students were across the programme. The visitors were also unclear as to how students are informed about the elements of the programme where attendance is mandatory. In discussion with the programme team, it was clarified that student' attendance is mandatory across all practical elements of the programme and that this is monitored closely. However, it was also highlighted that while full attendance was expected at all taught modules an attendance sheet was not completed for every module session. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation to clarify where attendance is mandatory for students, and the effects non-attendance may have on their progression through the programme. The visitors also require further evidence of how attendance throughout the course of the programme is monitored.

3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence regarding the plans for continued service user and carer involvement within the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors noted that there was limited information provided on service user and carer involvement within the programme. Discussions with the programme team at the visit indicated that the dedicated service users and carers who contribute to the Foundation programme will also contribute to this programme in a similar way. However, in discussions with the dedicated service user and carers that are involved in the Foundation it was clear that they have not been approached to be involved in this programme. The visitors recognised that the involvement of service users and carers is still at the early stages for this programme and that there is an intention to develop a bank of service users and carers to be involved in the programme in the future. However, the visitors were provided with limited information regarding how this group would be developed, and how service users and carers would be involved in the programme in the future. The visitors were therefore unable to determine from the evidence provided that a plan is in place on how service users will be involved in the programme. In order to determine that this standard is met the visitors require further evidence demonstrating the plans for service user and carer involvement in this programme.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how they maintain a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: The visitors noted a number of different documents submitted by the education provider to demonstrate how the programme meets this standard. However,

in considering the initial documentation submitted and discussions held at the visit, the visitors could not find any evidence of overarching policies, systems and procedures in place regarding the approval and monitoring of placements used by the programme. From discussions with the programme team, it was unclear how the education provider would maintain responsibility for the approval and monitoring of practice placements. The visitors could not determine the criteria used by the programme team to assess a placement and the overall process undertaken to approve it, as well as how activities such as the practice educator and student feedback feeds into this. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the overarching policies, systems and procedures in place regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, and how they are put into practice, to ensure this standard is met. In particular, the visitors require further evidence of the criteria used to approve placement providers and settings, the overall process for the approval and ongoing monitoring of placements, and how information gathered from placement providers at approval, or during a placement experience is considered and acted upon. Any such evidence should articulate what the process in place is and how this supports the review of the quality of a placement.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how they maintain a through and effective system of approving and monitoring non-ambulance placements.

Reason: The visitors noted a number of different documents submitted by the education provider to demonstrate how the programme team approves and monitors ambulance placements. From the documentation the visitors noted that the range of placement was limited to ambulance setting only. As such, no information was provided on how the programme team monitors and approved non-ambulance placements. In discussion with the students, the visitors heard that a number of students arranged their own non-ambulance placements without the approval and monitoring of the education provider. The visitors had concerns that there was no policies in place to respond appropriately if any difficulties arise around student experience because these placements were not approved or monitored by the education provider. The visitors discussed this was the programme team and it was revealed that they were not aware that students were arranging their own non-ambulance placements. The visitors were told that students are not expected to go and find their own non-ambulance placement and that it would be made clear to students that this would not be an option. As such, the visitors need confirmation that students will not be permitted to seek their own non-ambulance placements or if they are, that there is an effective and through system for approving these placements.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not lead to registration with the HCPC.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. This standard requires that the programme documentation clearly states that an aegrotat award will not provide eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register to avoid

any confusion. The visitors could not determine from the documentation how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not enable them to be eligible to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to be updated to clearly specify that an aegrotat award would not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. This is to provide clarity for students and to ensure that this standard is met.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which makes clear in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy. It was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence of the HCPC requirements regarding external examiners within the programme documentation.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should keep the staff numbers within the programme team under review to ensure that there continues to be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From assessing the documentation and the discussions with programme team and senior team, the visitors noted that there is an appropriate number of qualified and experience staff in place to deliver an effective programme. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied this standard is being met. However, the visitors would encourage the programme team to keep the staff numbers within the programme team under review to ensure that there continues to be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme as student numbers increase in the coming years.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the programme team continue to monitor and develop the learning resources available to students on the programme, to ensure that they continue to effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: From the tour of resources at the visit, the visitors were made aware of the variety and volume of resources available to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. They were therefore satisfied that this standard is met at a threshold. However, in discussion at the visit a number of students highlighted that the resources available to them is limited particularly in relation to profession specific resources. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors were made aware that a large volume of resources will be purchased ahead of the increase in student numbers which should ease demand on resources. The visitors would therefore like to recommend that the education provider continue to monitor and develop the learning resources available to students on the programme, to ensure that they continue to effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team continue to review and monitor the range of placements available for students on this programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation and in discussion with the programme team that students had the opportunity to experience a suitable number and range of placements. The visitors were therefore content this standard was met. In discussions with the programme team, it was highlighted that students do not experience any non-ambulance unless they go out and arrangement placement. The visitors noted that this meant that students had difference experience on this

programme. The visitor would like to encourage the programme team to continue to review and monitor the range of placement available for students on this programme so that students get the full experience with the range of placements.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to monitor the number of staff at the placement setting, to ensure that there continues to be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to support students, following the increase in student numbers.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that there are currently an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting, and therefore that this standard is met. However, from discussion with the practice placement team and the programme team, the visitors noted the challenges in regards to planning for the provision of practice placements with the recent increase in student numbers. The visitors would therefore suggest that the education provider continue to monitor the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to ensure it continues to be sufficient to meet the needs of the students at the placement setting.

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