HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Newcastle University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy, Full time Master of Speech and Language Sciences, Full time
Approval visit date	11 October 2017
Case reference	CAS-12022-C7Q2W3

Contents

Executive Summary

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

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

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

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

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 undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Lucy Myers	Speech and language therapist
Lorna Povey	Speech and language therapist
Frances Ashworth	Lay
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit
There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Simon Pallett	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Newcastle University
Gillian Cavagan	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Newcastle University
Julie Lachkovic	Representative for Royal College of Speech Language Therapists	Royal College of Speech Language Therapists

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Speech and language therapist
First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum student cohort	Up to 50 across the two programmes
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01867

Programme name	Master of Speech and Language Sciences
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Speech and language therapist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum student cohort	Up to 50 across the two programmes
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01760

We undertook this assessment of the two new programmes proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meets our standards for the first time.

The education provider informed the HCPC that their currently approved four year BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Sciences programme will be moving to two programmes.

Considering the broad scope of changes proposed to the speech and language therapy provision at the education provider, and as a new programme at a higher academic level is being proposed, we decided the most appropriate way to scrutinise how the two replacement programmes will meet our standards is via the approval process.

As noted in the tables above, the two proposed programmes are:
- a three year BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy programme and
- a four year Master in Speech and Language Sciences.

The Masters programme is an integrated masters, which would be an additional one year programme following on from the three years BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy programme, however the programme is named a Master of Speech and Language Sciences.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence,

we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	We met with learners and graduates of the current BSc (Hons) programme, as well as a learner on the HCPC-approved MSc Language and Pathology programme, which was not reviewed through this process
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers and educators	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that 44 of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further

evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 15 December 2017.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there are processes in place for service users to give consent when working with learners in all practice-based learning settings.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the education provider referenced the staff handbook, which states that service users and carers are to provide verbal and / or written consent when working with learners, and in some cases, the consent procedures are determined within specific external organisations. At the visit, the programme team explained there are a number of ways that learners and practice-based learning staff obtain consent from service users. For example, in paediatric settings, there would be permissions slips and a phone call with parents before the learner works with the child. In these cases there would also be a conversation when first meeting the parents, with the clinical educator and learner involved. At the meeting with the practice educators, the visitors heard that formal consent letters are sent to service users who will be working with learners on the programmes. The programme team noted that there are different consent forms for the different clinics where the service users work with learners on the programme. Considering the evidence provided, the visitors agree that there are processes in place to obtain consent from service users. However, from the information provided the education provider does not have a process in place to audit the consent processes in all practice-based learning settings, to enable them to make the judgement that there are effective consent protocols in place. Therefore, it is not clear how the education provider has oversight of the processes in place for all practice based learning settings. Therefore, the education provider must clearly demonstrate there is a process in place to manage and make judgements about the appropriateness of consent protocols in all practice-based learning settings.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must define level of attendance required, the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and the consequences for learners where there is non-attendance.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear on the specific attendance requirements and what the follow up action would be if learners fell below any threshold. The speech and language sciences general handbook defines the process for learners to follow for absences, and that all learners record their attendance by swiping their SMART card at every class. However, the documentation does not define a specific requirement for where attendance is mandatory on the programmes. The placement handbook for students states that "attendance at clinical placement sessions is mandatory, except in cases where ill-health or other serious factors make this impossible". The process to follow if learners are unable to attend is made clear in the documentation. However, the visitors are unclear what the consequences or follow-up action would be for learners where there is non-attendance. The general handbook

states that "after a significant number of absences, action may be taken under the University General Regulations that could results in termination of your programme of study". From discussion with the learners, the understanding was that there was an expectation from the education provider for 100 percent attendance, however if attendance fell below 95 percent, the education provider would be in contact with them. From discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard that attendance at clinical placement is 100 percent mandatory, and that it would be assessed on a case-by-case basis how to proceed if a learner has a fair reason to fall below 100 percent. The programme team advised the visitors that if a learner's attendance fell below 80 percent, this would be flagged by the administrator and taken forward. The visitors heard that there are some sessions that are mandatory for learners to attend, such as the safeguarding session; if this were missed, the learner would be required to make this up. From this information, the visitors were not clear of the level of attendance required, which parts of the programmes are mandatory, or the consequences for learners if their attendance drops below any threshold, or where there is non-attendance of mandatory sessions. As such, the education provider must define the level of attendance required, the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and the consequences for learners where there is non-attendance.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a system in place for approving and monitoring all practice-based learning.

Reason: At the visit, the visitors heard from the programme team that there are no formal agreements or processes in place for approving placements, and that placement approval is based on long-standing collaboration between the practice-based learning providers and the education provider.

The education provider has campus clinic practice-based learning as well as external organisation practice-based learning for learners on the programmes. The visitors learned that ensuring quality of practice-based learning is largely based on learner feedback. The placement handbook for practice educators talks about a clinical placement / educator feedback form that is completed by all learners at the university immediately following the placement. The clinical coordinator collates a summary of the feedback and this is discussed at the Clinical Coordinator Committee (CCC) and Student Practice Experience Committee (SPEC) meetings to ensure relevant issues are addressed. During discussions with practice education providers, the visitors heard that historically, the education provider visited all placement providers and vetted them for initial approval. Currently, the practice education providers largely monitor all their own placements, and learner feedback is used through learner evaluations of placements for ongoing monitoring.

At the visit, the visitors questioned the programme team on what the process is now for approving new placements. The visitors heard there would first be informal discussion; the education provider would then visit the practice education provider to provide in-service training, identify a range of placements they expect in placement, and to encourage the practice education provider to identify their representatives for the Clinical Coordinator Committee. The education provider noted this will also be based on collaboration, as there is not process currently for formal agreements when approving practice education providers. The visitors understand from the documentation that the

education provider is the only institution that offers pre-registration speech language therapy programmes in the region, and as such, partnerships with local organisations and services are seen as longstanding and successful. However, in order for the visitors to make a judgement on whether the standard has been met, the education provider must demonstrate that there is a well-defined, robust process for approving and ensuring the quality of all practice-based learning settings.

5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a system in place to ensure that practice-based learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment for learners and service users.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear what policies the education provider has in place to ensure that the practice-based learning settings take place in environments that are safe and supportive for learners and service users. This relates to the visitors not being clear on what policies are in place to effectively approve and monitor all practice-based learning settings. The visitors learned that historically, the education provider visited all practice education providers and vetted them for initial approval. During discussions with practice education providers and the programme team, the visitors learned that practice education providers largely monitor their own practice based learning. However, the education provider has not demonstrated whether the audit process, which is largely based on learner feedback, is effective, and how any new practice-based learning settings would be approved. As the education provider has not identified an effective system for approving and ensuring the ongoing quality of practice-based learning, the visitors cannot make a judgement about whether the education provider has a system for ensuring that the practice-based learning settings provide a safe and supportive environment for learners and service users. As such, the education provider will need to demonstrate what systems they have in place that will ensure the practice-based learning settings provide a safe and supportive environment for learners and service users.

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

Condition: The education provider must define what they consider as an appropriate number of practice-based learning staff, demonstrate why this is the case, and how they will monitor this number going forward.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors found information on the processes for selecting appropriately qualified practice-based learning staff. However, there was no information on staff numbers or what the education provider considered to be a suitable number for staff involved in practice-based learning, for the number of learners and the type of placement. The clinical placement process: a guide document, states that "it is the Clinical Coordinator Committee (CCC) representatives' responsibility to consider staffing to ensure an adequate number of appropriate qualified, registered and trained staff are available for the duration of a particular placement". While there is information on how practice educators are selected, there is no information on what the education provider defines as an appropriate number of practice based learning staff. In addition, it is not clear how this is monitored by the education provider to ensure the number of practice-based learning staff is suitable for

the number of leaners and the type of placement. As such, the education provider must define what they consider as an appropriate number of practice-based learning staff, demonstrate why this is the case and how they will monitor this number going forward.

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.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate they have a system in place for ensuring practice educators are HCPC registered, or have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning in the practice-based learning setting.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors found that the placement handbook for practice educators states that practice educators for learners on the programmes should be HCPC registered. However there was no information in the documentation to demonstrate that the education provider has a system in place to ensure this. In discussion with the programme team, it was noted that the practice education provider's human resources team would have a process to check and record that practice educators are HCPC registered. However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider had oversight of these policies to ensure that all practice educators would be registered as appropriate. The visitors also noted that there could be practice-based learning where learners would be supervised by professionals other than speech and language therapists, and were unclear whether these individuals would need to be registered with the appropriate regulator. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate there is system in place to ensure that all practice educators are HCPC registered, or have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning in the practice-based learning setting.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a process in place for ensuring that all practice educators are receiving the appropriate initial and update training.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors noted that there is appropriate and regular training made available to practice educators. However, the visitors were not clear how the attendance or undertaking of this training is monitored, or how the education provider ensures that all practice educators are using the available training. The placement handbook for practice educators includes a section on practice educator support and training. The training includes a series of workshops each year, run by the education provider. The workshops include introductory, follow-up, annual update, professional context and advanced workshops. The introductory workshop is mandatory and the education provider asks that all practice educators attend before taking students for the first time. The annual update workshop is also a mandatory training requirement involving one representative from each practice education provider. The placement handbook states "each placement provider or service sends a representative to this workshop and then attendees disseminate a written summary of key updates to service colleagues". However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider ensures that attendees pass this information to other practice educators. All other

workshops mentioned are provided as opportunities for practice educators to attend, rather than being mandatory. However, the visitors could not see from the documentation how attendance was recorded, where mandatory, or how attendance is monitored for each practice educator. During discussions with the programme team, the visitors learned there is a record of who has undertaken the training at the end of placements only. The visitors agree there is regular and appropriate training made available to practice educators, however there is no evidence to show that all practice educators are receiving the appropriate initial and update training, especially where the training is disseminated from representatives who attend the training. Therefore, in order for the visitors to make a judgement on whether this standard is met, the education provider must demonstrate the process in place to ensure all practice educators are receiving the appropriate and regular training.

6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the criteria for passing clinical placements is an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' achievement.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors noted that there is a 'clinical evaluation report' that is used to assess learners throughout placement. The report states that for an overall assessment mark as a pass "the student has reached competency in most or all areas expected for the corresponding stage of the course". The visitors noted that there could be varying interpretations for "most or all" by learners and practice educators. During discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the 'most' is dependent on the range of experiences that learners are able to cover across their placements. For example, a learner may not have the opportunity to experience a particular area while on placement, therefore cannot be marked on all areas expected. However, the visitors noted that the term 'most or all' may not be interpreted objectively, reliably and fairly by learners and practice educators. As such, the education provider must revise the documentation to clearly define what requirements are for learners to obtain an overall assessment mark as a pass, in order to demonstrate there is an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

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. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider strengthen how they plan and monitor service user and carer involvement, including service user and carer contribution to the governance and continuous improvement of the programmes.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors understood that service users and carers were involved in teaching and learning on the current approved programmes. The staff handbook states that service users and carers are involved in admission process (video resources for interviews), student learning and assessment (video resources), teaching sessions and evaluation of campus clinic provision. At the

visit, the visitors met the service users and carers who are involved in teaching and learning, such as those who present guest lectures or are involved in discussions with learners. The visitors were unable to meet with those service users and carers involved in the video resources, however the programme team talked about a group of service users with aphasia who were involved in a video, which is used for the interview process for programme admissions. The visitors noted that there is currently no involvement of service users and carers in committees or planning, and that the education provider does not currently arrange regular or formal meetings for service users and carers involved in the programmes. While the visitors found that service users and carers were involved in the programmes in various ways, the visitors noted that the education provider could strengthen the planning and monitoring of this involvement to ensure meaningful and ongoing involvement. This could include regular meetings organised by the education provider to involve service users and carers in planning and to meet with other service users and carers involved in the programmes. The visitors also found that service users and carers were mainly involved through teaching and learning, and that the education provider could strengthen the involvement of service users and carers by involving them in the governance processes and continuous improvement of the programme.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

Second response to conditions required
The education provider responded to the conditions set out in section 4. Following their consideration of this response, the visitors were satisfied that the conditions for several of the standards were met. However, they were not satisfied that the following conditions were met, for the reasons detailed below. Therefore, in order for the visitors to be satisfied that the following conditions are met, they require further evidence.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a system in place for approving and monitoring all practice-based learning.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the education provider has provided an overview of the 'Placement Quality Assurance: Self-Assessment Report'. The education provider intends to use this self-assessment report to demonstrate how they monitor all practice-based learning settings to meet the standards in SET 5. The visitors understand that the practice education providers complete the self-assessment report; however, they were unclear how the education provider checks adherence to this. The education provider notes that new practice education providers will be supported to complete the Self-Assessment report as part of the approval process, while existing practice education providers will submit the report annually in September. However, the visitors could not determine what mechanisms the education provider has in place for ensuring the quality of the self-assessment completed by practice education providers. As such, the visitors require further evidence on how the self-assessment report completed by the practice education providers is verified by the education provider to ensure a robust system for approving and monitoring all practice-based learning.

Suggested documentation: Evidence on how the self-assessment report completed by practice education providers is verified by the education provider.

5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a system in place to ensure that practice-based learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment for learners and service users.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the education provider gave an overview of the 'Placement Quality Assurance: Self-Assessment Report'. The education provider intends to use this self-assessment report to demonstrate how they monitor all practice-based learning settings to meet the standards in SET 5. The visitors understand that the practice education providers complete the self-assessment report; however, they were unclear how the education provider checks adherence to this. The education provider notes that the self-assessment report will provide a way of monitoring the processes that a practice education provider has in place to ensure that learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment for learners and service users. However, the visitors could not determine what mechanisms the education provider has in place for ensuring the quality of the self-assessment completed by practice education providers. As such, the visitors require further evidence on how the self-assessment report completed by the practice education providers is verified by the education provider to ensure a robust system is in place to demonstrate this standard is met.

Suggested documentation: Evidence on how the self-assessment process is verified by the education provider.

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

Condition: The education provider must define what they consider as an appropriate number of practice-based learning staff, demonstrate why this is the case, and how they will monitor this number going forward

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the education provider gave an overview of the 'Placement Quality Assurance: Self-Assessment Report'. The education provider intends to use this self-assessment report to demonstrate how they monitor all practice-based learning settings to meet the standards in SET 5. The visitors understand that the practice education providers complete the self-assessment report; however, they were unclear how the education provider checks adherence to this. The education provider noted that they monitor the number of practice-based learning staff within the Self-Assessment report. However, the visitors could not determine what mechanisms the education provider has in place for ensuring the quality of the self-assessment completed by practice education providers. As such, the visitors require further evidence on how the self-assessment report completed by the practice education providers is verified by the education provider to ensure that the self-assessment report is a robust process to monitor practice-based learning staff.

Suggested documentation: Evidence on how the self-assessment process is verified by the education provider.

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.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate they have a system in place for ensuring practice educators are HCPC registered, or have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning in the practice-based learning setting.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the education provider gave an overview of the 'Placement Quality Assurance: Self-Assessment Report'. The education provider intends to use this self-assessment report to demonstrate how they monitor all practice-based learning settings to meet the standards in SET 5. The visitors understand that the practice education providers complete the self-assessment report; however, they were unclear how the education provider checks adherence to this. The education provider noted that HCPC registration status of SLT practice educators is embedded within placement bidding form and is monitored within the Self-Assessment report. However, the visitors could not determine what mechanisms the education provider has in place for ensuring the quality of the self-assessment completed by practice education providers. As such, the visitors require further evidence on how the self-assessment report completed by the practice education providers is verified by the education provider to ensure there is a robust system in place for ensuring HCPC registration of practice educators where relevant.

Suggested documentation: Evidence on how HCPC registration of SLT practice educators is verified by the education provider.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a process in place for ensuring that all practice educators are receiving the appropriate initial and update training.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the education provider gave an overview of the 'Placement Quality Assurance: Self-Assessment Report'. The education provider intends to use this self-assessment report to demonstrate how they monitor all practice-based learning settings to meet the standards in SET 5. The visitors understand that the practice education providers complete the self-assessment report; however, they were unclear how the education provider checks adherence to this. The education provider noted that ensuring all practice educators have attended the introductory workshop is monitored as part of the Self-Assessment report. However, the visitors could not determine what mechanisms the education provider has in place for ensuring the quality of the self-assessment completed by practice education providers. As such, the visitors require further evidence on how the self-assessment report completed by the practice education providers is verified by the education provider to ensure that there is an effective process in place for ensuring all practice educators are undertaking appropriate training.

Suggested documentation: Evidence on how the self-assessment process is verified by the education provider.

Section 6: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, and the request for further evidence set out in section 5, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 22 February 2018 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.