health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Cumbria
Programme name	Dip HE Paramedic Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	21 – 22 January 2015

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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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 27 August 2015. At the Committee meeting, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether 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	Vince Clarke (Paramedic) Glyn Harding (Paramedic) Simon Mudie (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	30 per cohort
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Kathryn Fox (University of Cumbria)
Secretary	Joanna Littlewood (University of Cumbria)

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	\square		
Descriptions of the modules	\square		
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	\boxtimes		
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	\boxtimes		
Practice placement handbook	\square		
Student handbook	\square		
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	\square		
External examiners' reports from the last two years	\square		

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	\boxtimes		
Programme team	\square		
Placements providers and educators / mentors	\square		
Students	\square		
Service users and carers	\square		
Learning resources	\square		
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	\square		

The HCPC met with students from the FdSc Paramedic Practice as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 42 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 16 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. 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 did not make any recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can be approved. 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 must revise the programme documentation, in particular advertising material, to clearly state that this programme is only open to students from the HM Armed Forces.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, it was not clear to the visitors who the potential students for this programme would be. Discussions with the senior team revealed that the HM Armed Forces would be the sole provider of potential students for this programme. It was confirmed by the senior team that this programme would not be open to anyone beside HM Armed Forces. However, the documentation provided prior to the visit did not reflect this information. As such, the visitors require the programme team to revise the programme documentation, in particular, admissions material to clearly articulate that students will only be recruited from the HM Armed Forces.

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 must revise the admissions information provided to ensure that applicants to the programme are informed of the expectations of the admissions process, and in particular any requirements around driving.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors noted in the programme specification, page 25, "Applicant must...hold a full UK driving licence by the time the student attends the interview stage". During discussion with the programme team, the visitors learnt that applicants are, in fact, not expected to hold a full UK driving licence by the time they attend the interview stage as stated in the documentation. The programme team confirmed that applicants are not required to hold a full UK licence to get on to the programme. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants to the programme. As such, the visitors require the programme team to revise the admission information given to applicants to reflect that a full UK licence is not a requirement to get onto the programme. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme will ensure that the applicants can make informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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 for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's requirements regarding criminal convictions checks.

Reason: From the information provided in the documentation and in discussion at the visit, the visitors were clear that all students must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as part of the admissions process to the programme. During discussions it was revealed that the HM Armed Forces would be responsible for administering DBS check and not the university. This is reflected in the documentation,

programme specification, page 24, states DBS checks would be "undertaken by HM Armed Forces for their students" and then "the outcome shared with the university". However the visitors had not been provided with evidence of the HM Armed Forces' process, how it is applied and how it is structured to deal with any issues that would arise as a result of the DBS checks. As such, the visitors could not determine how the admissions procedures apply the DBS checks, how the HM Armed Forces procedures work with those of the university and how any issues that may arise would be dealt with. In particular the visitors could not determine who makes the final decision about accepting a student onto the programme if any issue does arise. Therefore the visitors require further information about the DBS checks that are applied at the point of admission to this programme. In particular the visitors require further evidence of how the HM Armed Forces' process works with the university 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 for this programme and how it ensures that successful applicants meet the education provider's health requirements.

Reason: From the information provided in the documentation and in discussion at the visit the visitors were clear that all students must complete a health declaration as part of the admissions process to the programme. During discussions it was revealed that the HM Armed Forces would be responsible for administering the occupational health clearance and not the university. However the visitors had not been provided with evidence of the HM Armed Force's process, how it is applied and how it is used to identify what adjustments could or could not reasonably be made if health conditions were disclosed. As such the visitors could not determine how the admissions procedures apply the health declarations, how the HM Armed Forces' procedures work with those of the university and how any issues that may arise would be dealt with. In particular the visitors could not determine who makes the final decision about accepting a student if adjustments would be required. Therefore the visitors require further information about the health declarations that are applied at the point of admission to this programme. In particular the visitors require further evidence of how the HM Armed Forces' process works with the university process and clarification of who makes the final decision about accepting an applicant onto the programme if adjustments are required.

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 submit further information about the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) policy for the programme and evidence to demonstrate students will achieve all the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted the information given to applicants around AP(E)L on page 24 in the Programme Specification. "Application for direct entry to Level 5 of the DipHE Paramedic Practice by submission of a Practice Portfolio can be considered when an applicant is an IHCD qualified Ambulance

Technician and has verifiable experiential practice experience". During discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that the programme team has created a mapping document using IHCD as a benchmark to see whether student can progress to Level 5 by meeting SOPs set at Level 4. However, the visitors were not presented with this evidence. The visitors also heard that AP(E)L would be considered on an individual basis. The visitors were unclear what the AP(E)L process for this programme is and how students will achieve the SOPs for paramedics if they enter directly at Level 5 if they only have an IHCD Ambulance Technician qualification. The visitors therefore require further information about the AP(E)L policy for this programme and evidence to demonstrate how students who enter at Level 5 with IHCD qualification achieve all the SOPs for paramedics.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included instances of incorrect terminology and occasional errors. For example, page 25, in the Placement handbook states "If a number of absences detract from the number of hours required by the HCPC". This is incorrect as the HCPC does not stipulate a number of attendance hours required, it is the education provider's responsibility to manage attendance. Also, the programme briefing document, page 4, states that the programme is 'validated' by HCPC, rather than being 'approved' by the HCPC, which is the correct terminology. It is important that students are equipped with accurate information, and the visitors considered it to be important that the programme documentation of the profession. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to correct all instances of inconsistent and incorrect terminology, to ensure that students are not unintentionally misinformed either about the HCPC or the current landscape of regulation. In this way the visitors can determine how the resources to support student learning are being effectively used.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The education provider must revise the Level 4 Practice Assessment Document (PAD).

Reason: The visitors noted, from the documentation provided, that student will be equipped with two Practice Assessment Documents (PADs) one set at Level 4 and another set at Level 5. From reviewing the Level 4 PAD the visitors noted that competencies students are expected to demonstrate such as "**1.8** Practise within limits of competence and authority as a student paramedic" (Practice Assessment Document (PAD) Level 4). The visitors noted the competencies set in the PAD Level 4 document requires paramedic students to demonstrate the competencies 'independently', as opposed to 'indirect supervision'. This is confirmed in the key code in the documentation which list level 4 as 'independent'. At the visit, the visitors queried how students can demonstrate the competencies independently so early on in the programme. The programme team clarified that this was a documentation error, and

students are actually required to demonstrate the skill at Level 3 (Indirect supervision) as opposed to a Level 4 (independent). As such, the visitors require the education provider to revise the documentation to clearly articulate to the student and practice educators the level at which they should be demonstrating competencies. In this way the visitors can determine how the resources to support student learning are being effectively used.

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 programme team must revise the programme documentation to ensure that the attendance requirements are clearly identified and to include information as to what would trigger procedures for poor attendance.

Reason: From the documentation the visitors noted inconsistent and incorrect information given to students regarding the attendance policy. The student placement handbook, page 20, states "There are very strict rules about the minimum number of hours of training undertaken... which are laid down by the HCPC". This is incorrect as the HCPC does not stipulate a number of hours of attendance, it is the education provider responsibility to manage attendance. The Programme handbook, page 25, states "You are expected to meet a 100% attendance requirement which includes your online learning". In discussion with the students, it was clear that they understood the requirement of 100 per cent attendance, not because this information was communicated clearly and consistently but because this was expected of them through their Army training. The visitors recognise that the students from this programme are unique because of their position and training with HM Armed Forces. Discussions with the programme team revealed that there is a clear process in place, they also confirmed that the attendance requirement for both the university and the placement setting was 100 per cent, and that tutors would contact the student if more than three lectures were missed. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation to ensure that the attendance requirements are clearly identified and to include information as to what would trigger procedures for poor attendance.

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 a review of the documentation prior to the visit, the visitors were unable to determine how service user and carers are currently involved in the programme. From the discussions with the programme team it was clear that formal future plans have yet to be finalised to involve service users in the programme. The visitors were provided with limited information regarding how service users and carers will be involved in the programme. During discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard that one of the core team members has recently been appointed to manage the involvement of service users and carers across all the health faculties. The programme team spoke of their intention to grow the pool of service users and carers involved in the programme and make it a faculty wide approach to the involvement of service users and carers involved in the visitors require further evidence demonstrating the plans for future service user and carer involvement.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team have considered and addressed the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base included in relevant curriculum guidance, particularly from the professional body.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that the education provider has considered the QAA benchmark statements for Paramedics. However, from the documentation the visitors could not see where the education provider has considered and addressed the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base included in relevant curriculum guidance, set by the professional body. During discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the team have considered the relevant curriculum guidance set by the professional body. The programme team gave a detailed discussion of all the ways the programme curriculum considers the professional body's guidance. However, this was not clear in the documentation. The visitors also heard that the programme team have undergone a College of Paramedics' mapping exercise, but the visitors were not presented with this information. As such, the visitors require the programme team to provide further evidence of how the programme's curriculum considers the standards set by the professional body. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme reflects the philosophy. core values and knowledge base of the relevant curriculum guidance from the professional body for the Paramedic profession.

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.

Condition: The programme team must provide further clarification of how the scheme of placements, including the number, duration and range of placements, will work in practice and identify which learning outcomes will be achieved in each placement.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the programme's scheme of placement is designed to provide students with sufficient placement experience to meet relevant learning outcomes. However the visitors could not determine how the practice placements arrangements will work. A detailed breakdown of each placement that students are required to complete is not clearly articulated in the programme documentation and it is also unclear as to which of the learning outcomes will be achieved in each placement. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the scheme of placements will work in practice to be sure that the duration and range of practice placements are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of identified learning outcomes.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and outline the processes in place, to demonstrate evidence of the audit tool and supporting mechanisms used to approve and monitor all placements.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the HM Armed Forces secure the practice placements with a number of Trusts such as the North West Ambulance NHS Trust and will have an agreement in place with the education provider to deliver the programme. The SETs mapping document presented to the visitors states "Memorandums of Understanding in place between the armed forces and the NHS Ambulance NHS Trust provisions of placements". However, the visitors were not presented with evidence that shows the agreements between the education provider and the practice placement providers. From the documentation submitted, it was unclear how the education provider would maintain responsibility for the approval and monitoring of practice placements. The visitors could not find evidence of formal mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of practice placements before they are used. From discussions with the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors noted that a number of informal mechanisms are used to check and monitor the quality of practice placements. The visitors highlighted that formal arrangements should be in place so that the education provider is able to ensure the quality of all practice placements. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence that demonstrates the programme has a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how they ensure that all practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the HM Armed Forces secure the practice placements with a number of Trusts such as the North West Ambulance NHS Trust and will have an agreement in place with the education provider to deliver the programme. However, the visitors were not presented with evidence that shows the agreements between the education provider and the practice placement providers. From the documentation submitted, it was unclear how the education provider would maintain responsibility for the approval and monitoring of practice placements. The visitors could not find evidence of formal mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of practice placements before they are used. The visitors highlighted that formal arrangements should be in place so that the education provider is able to ensure that all practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence of the auditing processes to demonstrate how they ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how they ensure that all practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the HM Armed Forces secure the practice placements with a number of Trusts such as the North West Ambulance NHS Trust and will have an agreement in place with the education provider to deliver the programme. However, the visitors were not presented with evidence that shows the agreements between the

education provider and the practice placement providers. From the documentation submitted, it was unclear how the education provider would maintain responsibility for ensuring practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training. During discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that there are practice educator training options that are offered to practice educators, including a multi-professional module on mentorship delivered by the education provider and online refresher courses. The visitors acknowledged that there are training opportunities and workshops provided by the education provider for practice placement educators but were unable to see how each individual placement educator's training is monitored, how the education provider takes responsibility for this, or how the requirements for training feeds into partnership agreements with the providers. The visitors were also unclear about the steps taken by the education provider to ensure that suitably trained placement educators were in place for students. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of their processes to ensure placement educators are appropriately registered, or agree other arrangements.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the HM Armed Forces secure the practice placements with a number of Trusts such as the North West Ambulance NHS Trust and will have an agreement in place with the education provider to deliver the programme. However, the visitors were not presented with evidence that shows the agreements between the education provider and the practice placement providers. From the documentation submitted, it was unclear how the education provider would maintain responsibility for ensuring practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangement are agreed. The visitors could not find evidence of formal mechanisms in place to ensure the practice educators are appropriately registered. The visitors highlighted that formal arrangements should be in place so that the education provider is able to ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered or agree other arrangements with the students and practice placement provider. The visitors require the education provider to submit further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure placement educators are appropriately registered or how other arrangements are agreed.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;
- · expectations of professional conduct;
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The programme team must provide further information on the learning outcomes for non-ambulance service placements, including methods of assessment, and any alignment to academic modules.

Reason: The visitors noted that there will be placements in non-ambulance service settings, as highlighted in Student Placement Handbook, page 9 "a variety of relevant learning experiences, across patient journeys within pre-hospital, hospital emergency care and primary care". During discussions with students about their experience on non- ambulance placements, the visitors learnt that the students felt that the preparation for non - ambulance placements was not sufficient. Students provided detailed cases of where their practice placement educators were not aware that they were coming to do a placement with them, nor did the practice placement educators have any information or an understanding of the expected learning outcomes to be achieved by the students whilst at that placement. The visitors noted the importance of ensuring students have sufficient exposure to a variety of situations such as within hospital settings and other non NHS placements. However, the visitors could not find further detail in the documentation to support these placement experiences, regarding how these placements will be integrated with the programme, or information of the learning outcomes and associated assessments. They therefore require further evidence that the students and placement educators in non-ambulance placement settings are given sufficient information to understand the learning outcomes to be achieved, and are therefore fully prepared for placement in non-ambulance settings.

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 - expectations of professional conduct;
 - the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
 - communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The programme team must provide further information as to how the education provider ensures placement educators are fully prepared for placements.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the mapping document provided prior to the visit and noted a web link to the placement educator handbook online. The visitors could not determine from the practice placement handbook how the education provider ensured practice placement providers and educators are fully prepared for each individual placement particularly regarding the students' scope of practice and expectations of both the students and practice placement educators at each individual placement. The content of the website refers to preparation for the FdSc Paramedic Practice programme and did not provide any information on the Dip HE Paramedic Practice programme. From this information the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider ensures placement educators are fully prepared for placements. During discussion with the programme team the visitors were told about an online resource referred to as webfolio that is used to prepare practice educators for placement. The visitors did not have access to the webfolio but were informed that it is mandatory for all placement educator to access the webfolio as a way of preparation for

placement. Once practice educators access all the information on the webfolio, they have to email the programme team who keep a record of it. The documentation however, did not reflect this information. The visitors therefore require information about the mechanisms in place which demonstrates how the education provider ensures that practice educators are fully prepared for placement, as also how practice educators are made aware of students' scope of practice for each placement and the expectations of the practice placement educators at placement. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to support the way the placement educators and students will be prepared.

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

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate an aegrotat award will not lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors could therefore not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that any aegrotat awards conferred would not provide them eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding aegrotat awards to ensure that students are aware of the consequences of having an award of this type conferred.

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 include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register, or agree other arrangements.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. This standard requires the assessment regulations of the programme to state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed. Therefore the visitors require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the relevant documentation to ensure that this standard is met.

Vince Clarke Glyn Harding Simon Mudie