

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Wolverhampton
Programme name	Dip HE in Paramedic Science
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	7 – 8 October 2014

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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 12 February 2015. At the Committee meeting on 12 February 2015, 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 part of a joint event. The education provider validated the programme. The education provider and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Vincent Clarke (Paramedic) Penny Gripper (Lay visitor) Mark Nevins (Paramedic)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
Proposed student numbers	20 per cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	April 2015
Chair	Megan Thomas (University of Wolverhampton)
Secretary	Rachel Ford
Members of the joint panel	Alison Felce (Internal Panel Member) Rachel Ford (Internal Panel Member) Ruth Shiner (Internal Panel Member)

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit, the programme is a new programme and therefore no reports exist.

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service users and carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC met with students from the BNurs (Hons) Adult Nursing programme and other programmes, 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 43 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 15 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 have also made a recommendation 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

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored through the admissions procedures.

Reason: The mapping document for the Standards of Education and Training (SETs) made reference to documents in relation to this standard. However, the visitors noted the equality and diversity policy appeared not to be up to date. During the visit and from discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that there was an updated equality and diversity policy in place in relation to applicants and students, but were not clear how it is implemented and monitored. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the equality and diversity policies in place, together with an indication of how they are implemented and monitored in order to determine whether this standard is met.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show the status of the partnership arrangements between the education provider and the partner organisation including the draft of these arrangements finalised and signed.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, the partnership arrangements between the education provider and the partner organisation West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) which articulated the responsibilities each partner has in the effective delivery of the programme. The visitors were able to identify how the proposed partnership arrangements between the education provider and WMAS could ensure that the programme has a secure position in the education provider's business plan. However, in the senior team meeting it was discussed that because of the timing of this approval visit, the programme may not start in January 2015. It was agreed during the meeting, that the partnership arrangements need to reflect the new start date of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show the draft of these partnerships finalised and signed, to determine how the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided and during discussion with the senior management team at the visit, the visitors noted that plans to recruit an additional staff member has been agreed. However, from discussions at the visit, it was not clear when this recruitment would take place. Furthermore, the visitors were unable to determine how, following the recruitment to this post, there will be an adequate

number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that staff with specialist expertise and knowledge are in place to deliver the programme.

Reason: The education provider included staff Curriculum vitae(s) with the documentation, and the visitors were content that some of the staff have specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver this programme, however, they noted that only one staff member was a registered paramedic. During discussion with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors learnt that the education provider is planning to recruit another member of staff who will be a paramedic and will also consider employing visiting paramedic tutors for the delivery of this programme. The visitors were concerned about whether subject areas were being taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. The visitors therefore require information on any additional staffing resources that are in place to support the delivery of an effective programme, to include details of the visiting staff members of the programme team and their allocated areas of responsibility across the programme. This condition is in line with SET 3.5. The education provider should detail how they ensure that staff have relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver the programme effectively.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the relevant guidance issued by HCPC. For example, there was reference to the HCPC regulating 13 professions in a number of places in the documentation for example, module 5HW053, p141. The visitors also noted on page 98 of the programme specification “HCPC Standards of Proficiency for paramedics in England”. With reference to these two examples respectively; the HCPC is a regulatory body regulating 16 professions and the Standard of Proficiency for paramedics are for all paramedics in the United Kingdom. The visitors require the documentation to be reviewed to remove any instances of incorrect or out-of-date terminology. In this way the visitors can be sure that the documentary resources available to support students’ learning are being effectively used and that this standard can be met.

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 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: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors were unable to determine how this standard is met. During the visit and discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that there are appropriate protocols in place to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users. Visitors were given a “student consent form” during the visit however due to time constraints, the visitors could not review the document. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about participation requirements within the programme, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, or how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of protocols for obtaining informed consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

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 identify where on the programme students’ attendance is mandatory and how the attendance mechanisms are effectively communicated and monitored.

Reason: The programme documentation submitted prior to the visit did mention attendance for this programme. However, the visitors noted that each module has different mandatory attendance requirements and monitoring mechanisms. During discussions with the programme team, it was highlighted that these individual module requirements are not clearly articulated in the programme documents. Therefore the programme team will need to clearly identify where students’ attendance is mandatory and the procedures and mechanisms in place to monitor it effectively. The visitors require the programme documentation to be revised to clearly identify where on the programme students’ attendance is mandatory and how the attendance mechanisms are effectively communicated and monitored.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, each with several of the SOPs listed as being covered in each module. There was also a mapping document which showed the SOPs mapped against module titles and learning outcomes. The education provider changed and updated some of the learning outcomes for modules 5HW053 and 5HW054 as part of the post panel process for the internal validation. The education provider did provide further detailed mapping to show how the changes made to the modules’ learning outcomes mapped onto specific teaching and learning opportunities and demonstrated how all the SOPs were met. However, the visitors did not have time to assess these changes and determine all the SOPs are met. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme’s learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme

meet the SOPs for paramedics to ensure that this standard is met. The visitors require a detailed breakdown of how each SOP is delivered in relation to the learning outcomes including SOPs covered in modules 5HW053 and 5HW054.

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

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to show how the programme reflects the relevant curriculum guidance and external reference frameworks.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that page 98 of the programme specification mentions the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008), QAA The Quality Code (2013), QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality & Standards in Higher Education & SEEC Level Descriptors (2006) and The College of Paramedics (COP) Curriculum (2014) as a point of reference as a relevant external reference point. The visitors were content that the different requirements of QAA have been reflected in the curriculum. However, the visitors noted in COP mapping document on page 321 that some of the curriculum standards have been left blank. The visitors were given further mapping document during the visit to show how the programme reflect the COP curriculum guidance but the visitors did not have enough time to assess these documents. Therefore the visitors could not determine from the documentation how the COP curriculum (2014) is reflected in the programme curriculum. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the curriculum reflects the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge of the paramedic profession and qualification.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence of the mechanisms that will be in place to ensure that the curriculum will remain current.

Reason: The visitors were provided with evidence of the currency of the programme within the SETs mapping for this programme, outlining the guidance and frameworks which have formed the foundations of the curriculum in its current form. The visitors were satisfied that the currency of the curriculum was fulfilled however; they were unclear as to how the programme team will ensure currency of the curriculum going forward. This standard requires evidence of how the activities of the programme team and any external stakeholders will make sure the curriculum stays relevant over time. As referred to in the condition against 3.5, the programme is in the process of recruiting staff to the programme and intend to invite visiting tutors. The visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms that the programme team will have in place, such as ongoing professional input, to keep the curriculum up-to-date with the current practice for the profession.

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 on campus course guide, page 8: “You will be expected to complete 750 hours per year (1500 in total) of clinical practice in a range of pre hospital and other healthcare placements”. The visitors also noted in Practice Learning Handbook on page one, that students will attend placements as part of their programme. The placements providers are WMAS, other NHS trusts and non NHS placement providers. 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 and students in the placement settings are fully prepared for placements.

Reason: At the visit, the programme team and practice placement providers indicated that they are in the process of developing a “skills passport” to ensure all practice educators are aware of the students’ progress and their scope of practice. The programme team talked through how they envisage this will be used alongside the

Practice Assessment Document (PAD) in assessing and preparing students and preparing practice placement educators in the practice placement setting. The visitors were unclear as to how the placement educators and students will be prepared in using it. This standard is also link to the other condition placed on SET 5.11 above. Therefore, the visitors require further documents including the “skills passport” to support the way the placement educators and students will be prepared.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency for paramedics.

Reason: In line with the visitors’ concerns relating to SET 4.1, they noted that the mapping documentation provided prior to the visit has been amended to make it clear. The education provider provided the amended mapping document during the visit, however, the visitors did not have time to review the amended mapping document and determine how all students who successfully completed the programme demonstrated that they had met all the standards of proficiency. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme’s assessment strategy and design ensures that all students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency to ensure that this standard is met.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must submit any revised module descriptors for the programme.

Reason: As detailed in the reasons for SET 4.1, discussion at the visit indicated the programme team have amended the learning outcomes for modules 5HW053 and 5HW054, including assessment, as part of the post panel process for the internal validation. The visitors will need to review them to ensure changes will not adversely affect the assessment of the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to resubmit the programme module descriptors for 5HW053 and 5HW054 so that the visitors can determine this standard is met.

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence of how they ensure that the assessments are applied consistently and objectively.

Reason: From the documentation received, the visitors noted that the education provider ensured students’ performance will be assessed in both academic and placement settings. The visitors noted in the module descriptors that assessment criteria including Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) were used to assess students’ performance. However, the visitors noted inconsistency in the assessment of students’ performance in both settings. For example the OSCEs used to assess students in academic settings carried inconsistent weighting and pass marks. This condition is linked to the condition set against SET 5.11. During the programme

team meeting, the visitors learnt the assessment criteria for assessing students' performance will be revised to ensure requirements are clearly explained including weighting and pass marks. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit revised assessment criteria in both settings to demonstrate how students' performance will be assessed consistently, objectively and ensure fitness to practice.

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 revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. Discussion indicated aegrotat awards would only be awarded in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. The visitors could not determine 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 further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding the aegrotat award.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the education provider consider providing further information to potential applicants about the profession of paramedic including the professional values.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about the programme. The visitors noted the programme does provide initial information about paramedic as a profession. The visitors suggest the education provider may wish to consider strengthening the initial information about the philosophy and core values of paramedic profession. The visitors feel this way the education provider would further enhance the calibre of potential students for this programme. Also, this would enhance decision making for potential applicants if they are fully aware of the career this programme can lead to and the regulatory and professional requirements of the profession. The visitors suggest some initial information around professional values online may provide a valuable resource for these potential applicants.

Mark Nevins
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