

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Wolverhampton
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science – Full time
Approval visit date	25 May 2017
Case reference	CAS-11674-C3K1T6

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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 the programme 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:

Glyn Harding	Paramedic
Sheila Needham	Lay
Anthony Hoswell	Paramedic
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	September 2016
Maximum student cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP01655

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment. The education provider had informed the HCPC via the major change process that they wished to increase student numbers, from one annual cohort of thirty students to two annual cohorts of fifty students.

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
Student handbook	Yes
Practice placement handbook	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes

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

Group	Met
Students	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Placement providers and educators	Yes
Service users and carers	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Tour of facilities	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 55 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 18 August 2017.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all subject areas are taught by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Reason: The visitors were able to review staff CVs in the programme documentation and discuss staffing with the senior team. They were clear that the education provider had plans for recruitment to cover the increase in student numbers from one cohort of around 30 per year to around 100 per year across two cohorts. Two new staff were already in place. The senior team gave verbal reassurances that recruitment of three further staff would occur in April 2018, in time for the second cohort on the expanded programme. However, the visitors did not see the recruitment criteria or an indication of the roles and responsibilities of the staff that would be recruited. As such they could not determine, from the evidence provided, if the staff that would be recruited would have the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to take on the relevant responsibilities in delivering the programme. Therefore the visitors were not able to be certain that all subject areas on the programme would be taught by staff with appropriate specialist expertise and knowledge. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating how they will ensure that all subject areas will be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

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 education provider must demonstrate that the number, duration and range of placements will be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme.

Reason: The visitors were able to review programme documentation relating to placement scheduling, including a spreadsheet, and discuss issues about scheduling with the programme team and a large and diverse group of practice placement providers and educators. They were able to see evidence of the education provider's plans for placements for the larger cohorts of students that would be on the approved programme. They noted that the education provider had good relationships with placement providers and that placement providers were committed to finding placements for all students on the programme. However they were not able to see evidence showing the exact breakdown and scheduling of ambulance and non-ambulance placements. They were also unable to see what agreements are in place to ensure that the anticipated number of practice placements that would be needed by the programme would be made available. As such the visitors were unable, from the evidence provided, to determine whether the standard was met by the programme. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating

that there will be an appropriate range, duration and number of placements for all students on the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that they maintain a thorough and effective audit system for placements.

Reason: The visitors were able to review documents relating to how the education provider approached monitoring and approval of placements, and discuss how this approach was used by the programme team. They noted from discussions that with regard to ambulance placements, the education provider was part of a consortium that used a shared audit tool, the Learning Environment Profile (LEP), over which West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) appeared to have overall ownership. The visitors noted that, although the education provider had a very close working relationship with WMAS and was part of the consortium that had developed the LEP, this tool was used by WMAS and the information generated by this process held by them. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider uses the information generated by the LEP to ensure that they are maintaining a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring placements for their students. In particular, it was not clear to the visitors who had final institutional responsibility for maintaining the LEP. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating that they have a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

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.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should keep programme documents under review to ensure that they are consistent and accurate.

Reason: The visitors were able to review the documentation prior to the visit. They noted that there were some inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Different figures were given for the total number of placement hours on the programme. There were some uses of “HPC” instead of “HCPC” (for example on page 484 of 547). The section dealing with admissions criteria used the phrase “definite leave to remain” instead of “indefinite leave to remain”. These were raised with the programme team in discussions. The inaccuracies were acknowledged and a verbal commitment was made to review all relevant materials. As such the visitors were content that this standard was met by the programme. However, to ensure that the documentation continues to be up-to-date and accurate the visitors therefore recommend that the programme team keep the documents under regular review to ensure they continue to be correct and accurate information is given to students.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and 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.**

Recommendation: The education provider should continue its efforts to ensure that students are given timely information about the timing and duration of placements.

Reason: The visitors were able to review the programme documentation regarding preparation for placement, and speak to students, placement providers and placement educators about the subject. The visitors considered that the standard was met overall, as materials available to students gave clear information about the purpose and nature of placements, and neither the student panel or the placement providers and educators' panel reported any widespread major concerns with preparedness for placement. However, some students reported that they had only received information about placements quite close to the start of the placements, and that they would like more notice of the timing and duration of placements. This issue was raised in the programme team meeting, and the visitors were informed that staff aimed to give information in plenty of time, but had sometimes delayed giving students this information to avoid adding extra pressures to them close to assignment deadlines. The visitors suggest that the education provider considers when would be best to give all students the information about placement particularly if this information can be given sooner to facilitate greater time for placement preparations.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, 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 23 November 2017 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).