

Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	Yorkshire Ambulance Service
<b>Validating body</b>	IHCD (Part of Edexcel)
<b>Programme name</b>	IHCD Paramedic Award
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time & Part time
<b>Relevant part of HPC register</b>	Paramedic
<b>Date of visit</b>	7-8 May 2008

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## Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 13 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 HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 29 July 2009. At the Committee meeting on 29 July 2009, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. 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 HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was an approved programme which had not been approved since the publication of the QAA subject benchmark statements. 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 HPC only visit. The education provider and validating/awarding 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 of HPC visitors and profession	Paul Bates (Paramedic) Bob Fellows (Paramedic) Derek Adrian-Harris (Radiographer)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Paula Lescott
HPC observer	Mandy Hargood
Proposed student numbers	Current intake four times each financial year (average twelve students per intake) over three sites – Doncaster, Wakefield and Burn Hall Training Centres
Initial approval	September 2000
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	April 2009
Chair	Linda Nelson (University of Teesside)
Secretary	Paula Astley (Yorkshire Ambulance Service)
Members of the joint panel	Bryan Ward (Yorkshire Ambulance Service, observer)

## Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider.

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
Trust Policy Documentation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External verifier reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review a programme specification or external examiners' reports prior to the visit as these documents do not exist.

The HPC did not review a practice placement handbook prior to the visit as a separate practice placement handbook has not been produced. The information is included in the Trust Policy documentation.

During the visit the HPC 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"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (e.g. specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval the visitors must be assured 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 their 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 ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 48 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 recommended for ongoing approval. 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 agreed that the education provider may wish to discuss some of these conditions with the validating/awarding body before attempting to respond to the conditions.

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

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

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

## Conditions

### **2.1 The admission procedures must give both applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.**

**Condition:** The programme team must review the programme documentation and remove references to state registration and Ambulance Service Association committees.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the programme team there were a number of out-dated references and the visitors felt that in order to prevent confusion the documentation must be updated to reference current terminology and organisations.

### **3.6 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation and provide evidence of the staff development policy to demonstrate the system of support that is in place for staff to participate in continuing professional and research development.

**Reason:** In discussion with the programme team it was expressed that a staff development policy was in place. The visitors felt that the documentation submitted did not reflect this and therefore wished to receive further evidence to demonstrate that this standard was being met.

### **3.7 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be used effectively.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that there is parity of resources across the three training sites.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the programme team there was some confusion as to the current numbers of resources at each of the training sites as there had been a recent addition of resources to the programme. The visitors wished to see updated lists of the resources at each site, including book lists, to ensure that there is parity across the training environments.

### **3.13 The learning resources, including the stock of periodicals and subject books, IT facilities (including internet access), must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that there is parity of resources across the three training sites.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the programme team there was some confusion as to the current numbers of resources at each of the training sites as there had recently been a recent addition of resources to the

programme. The visitors wished to see updated lists of the resources at each site, including book lists, to ensure that there is parity across the training environments.

**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 programme team must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect the following standards of proficiency and demonstrate how these learning outcomes are addressed and assessed.

**1a.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**

- be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession

**1a.4 Registrant paramedics must understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent**

**1a.6 Registrant paramedics must be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions

**1b.3 Registrant paramedics must be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers**

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible

- recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility
- be able to identify anxiety and stress in patients, carers and others and recognise the potential impact upon communication

**2b.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate actions**

- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice
- be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of a range of research methodologies
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice

**2c.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly**

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care

**2c.2 Registrant paramedics must be able to audit, reflect on and review practice**

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review

**3a.1 Registrant paramedics must know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice**

- understand the following aspects of behavioural science:
- psychological and social factors that influence an individual in health and illness
- how psychology and sociology can inform an understanding of physical and mental health, illness and health care in the context of paramedic practice and the incorporation of this knowledge into paramedic practice

- how aspects of psychology and sociology are fundamental to the role of the paramedic in developing and maintaining effective relationships

**Reason:** From the discussions with the programme team, the students and a review of the documents the visitors felt that the programme did not clearly link all of the learning outcomes to successful attainment of the standards of proficiency. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must clearly articulate where the above standards of proficiency are met in the programme to ensure that those who complete the programme are safe and effective practitioners.

#### **4.5 The delivery of the programme must assist autonomous and reflective thinking and evidence based practice.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide an outline of how autonomous practice, reflective thinking and evidence based practice is developed by students within the programme.

**Reason:** It was not clear within the documentation submitted by the programme team how students develop autonomous practice, reflective thinking and evidence based practice within the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that this standard is being met.

#### **5.2 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence the practice-based element of the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation supplied by the programme team information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that staff numbers and qualifications are adequate, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that the education provider has mechanisms in place to assure the adequacy of placement staff.

##### **5.3.1 The practice placement settings must provide a safe environment.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence their practical element of the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation supplied by the programme team information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement practice settings offer a safe environment to students, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that the education provider has mechanisms to assure practice placements provide a safe environment.

### **5.3.2 The practice placement settings must provide safe and effective practice.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence their practical element of the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation supplied by the programme team information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement practice settings provide a safe and effective practice environment for students, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that the education provider has mechanisms in place to assure safe and effective practice in the practice environment.

### **5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**

**Condition:** The programme team must review the programme documentation and map the capacity for clinical placements in accordance with planned training numbers.

**Reason:** In discussion with the programme team and students it was clear that there had been problems with practice placements in the central division region. This has led to students having to wait for longer periods for their placements to commence compared to students from other divisions. In order to ensure that there is parity across the student experience on the programme and that there is timely progression to complete the clinical elements, the visitors require further information to demonstrate that this matter is being addressed to ensure that this standard is being met.

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

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence their practical element of the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation supplied by the programme team information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement environments are suitable, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that this standard is addressed.

### **5.10 The education provider must ensure necessary information is supplied to practice placement providers.**

**Condition:** The programme team must review the programme documentation to show the criminal record bureau policy clearly, particularly in relation to the

sharing of student information between the programme team and the placement providers.

**Reason:** In discussions with the programme team and the placement providers there was apparent confusion regarding the process of sharing information about students attending practical placements, with differing expectations about the type of information that should be shared in relation to positive criminal record bureau checks. The visitors felt that this matter should be clarified to evidence that this standard is being met.

**6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practise.**

**Condition:** The programme team must review the programme documentation to clearly demonstrate the assessment procedures for the additional parts of the curriculum that the programme team have added onto the standard IHCD curriculum.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the programme team the assessment procedures for the additional parts of the curriculum that the programme team have added onto the standard IHCD curriculum was not provided. The visitors felt that to ensure that this standard is being met that this evidence is required.

**6.2 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practise safely and effectively.**

**Condition:** The programme team must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect the following standards of proficiency and demonstrate how these learning outcomes are assessed.

**1a.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**

- be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession

**1a.4 Registrant paramedics must understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent**

**1a.6 Registrant paramedics must be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions

**1b.3 Registrant paramedics must be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers**

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible
- recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility
- be able to identify anxiety and stress in patients, carers and others and recognise the potential impact upon communication

**2b.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate actions**

- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice
- be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of a range of research methodologies
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice

**2c.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly**

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care

**2c.2 Registrant paramedics must be able to audit, reflect on and review practice**

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures

- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review

**3a.1 Registrant paramedics must know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice**

- understand the following aspects of behavioural science:
- psychological and social factors that influence an individual in health and illness
- how psychology and sociology can inform an understanding of physical and mental health, illness and health care in the context of paramedic practice and the incorporation of this knowledge into paramedic practice
- how aspects of psychology and sociology are fundamental to the role of the paramedic in developing and maintaining effective relationships

**Reason:** From the discussions with the programme team, the students and a review of the documents the visitors felt that the programme did not clearly link all of the learning outcomes to successful attainment of the standards of proficiency. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must clearly articulate how those individuals who have completed the programme will have demonstrated fitness to practise through the assessment methods.

In relation to the English language standard of proficiency (be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5) the visitors felt that the learning outcomes, support mechanisms and entry requirements need to be evidenced in order to ensure that this standard is being met.

**6.7.5 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed.**

**Condition:** The programme team must provide evidence that an external examiner has been appointed to assess this programme. In order to meet this standard the external examiner must be from the relevant part of the Register unless alternative arrangements are made with the HPC. The programme documentation must be revisited to state this policy requirement.

**Reason:** In discussions with the programme team it was apparent that there was no external examiner for the programme. The visitors recognise that the validating/awarding body visits the education provider every year to assess the programme against their rules and regulations. However, the visitors did not feel this was the equivalent of an external examiner's review. The programme team must appoint an appropriate external examiner and clearly state in the documentation that this standard is being followed on the programme.

## Recommendations

### **2.1 The admission procedures must give both applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team rework the student handbook into one succinct document that would aid student understanding of the course and give them further information to guide them through the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the programme team the student handbook contained minimal information. The visitors felt that by including more information in the handbook on policies (such as support available for learning, and the Accreditation of Prior Experience or Learning (APEL) and failure policies), course information and the welfare and support available to students that this would aid the students' understanding of the programme.

### **2.2.5 The admission procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior learning and other inclusion mechanisms.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend that the education provider works in conjunction with their partner universities to develop the APEL policy in order to strengthen the policy and make it more appropriate to the programme.

**Reason:** Whilst the current APEL policy serves its purpose of ensuring applicants demonstrate their ability to meet the standards of proficiency, the visitors felt that after discussions with the programme team, the APEL policy could benefit from being strengthened to cover a wider range of the types of circumstances presented to the programme team. Therefore the visitors wished to encourage that this policy is adapted through communication with the partner universities to provide a consistent APEL process for all candidates.

### **3.13 The learning resources, including the stock of periodicals and subject books, IT facilities (including internet access), must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team strengthen the programme documentation to update book lists with named titles and the editions used, and to encourage that a wider range of texts is utilised in the programme.

**Reason:** Whilst the visitors felt that the resources on the programme were adequate they felt that information regarding texts could be strengthened in the documentation and that the programme team could review the range and currency of the texts being used, as the students would benefit from a wider range of texts and more current editions being utilised on the programme.

**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.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team build on inter-professional learning within the programme to enhance student preparation for practice placements and strengthen the attainment of the standards of proficiency under 1b.1.

**Reason:** The visitors felt that the student experience would be enhanced by the development of inter-professional learning and by further preparing students for working with other health professionals on practice placements across the three training sites.

**4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team review the programme against the current British Paramedic Association guidelines.

**Reason:** The documentation submitted by the programme team indicated that the programme had been mapped against the British Paramedic Association guidelines from 2006. The visitors felt that the programme would benefit from being reviewed against the latest British Paramedic Association guidelines.

**5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team consider reviewing the placement experience so that the duration and range of placements reflects a competency based approach rather than volume orientated.

**Reason:** The visitors felt that the range of placement experiences and assessments allow those who complete the programme to achieve the desired learning outcomes. However, the visitors felt, that by altering the way that students achieved competency in their assessments on placements from performing a set number of procedures to a competence based assessment, the students could benefit as this would remove the element of responsibility of focusing on achieving a certain volume of procedures from the student and allow them to experience other elements which they may otherwise miss out on.

**5.7.4 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team rework the student handbook into one succinct document that would aid student

understanding of the course and give them further information to guide them through the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the programme team the student handbook contained minimal information. Whilst the students are aware of procedures, the visitors felt that by including more information in the handbook on policies (such as the failure policy) that this would aid the students understanding of the programme.

**6.7.5 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors wished to recommend that the external examiner appointed by the programme team to assess the programme has experience of higher education institute requirements, and that the external examiner reports form part of the annual monitoring documentation submissions in the future.

**Reason:** The visitors wished to support the continuing positive experience that the programme team had expressed that their relationships with their partner universities had brought about by recommending that the programme's external examiner has prior experience of higher education institutes, as they felt that the education provider would benefit from the additional input of staff with experience of these processes and requirements.

Paul Bates  
Bob Fellows  
Derek Adrian-Harris