

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Sunderland
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Blood Science), Full time BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Cellular Science), Full time BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Genetic Science), Full time BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Infection Science), Full time
Approval visit date	27- 28 March 2018
Case reference	CAS-11960-T0D2Q7

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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 programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

## Section 1: Our regulatory approach

### Our standards

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

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

### How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

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

### HCPC panel

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

Manoj Mistry	Lay
Carol Ainley	Biomedical scientist
David Houlston	Biomedical scientist
Shaista Ahmad	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the approval visit

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

Claire Hoy	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland
Margaret Young	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland
Alan Wainwright	IBMS Representative	Institute of Biomedical Sciences

Gillian Jaggard	IBMS Representative	Institute of Biomedical Sciences
Rachel Thomas	IBMS Representative	Institute of Biomedical Sciences

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Blood Science)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 6
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01752

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Cellular Science)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 6
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01753

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Genetic Science)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 1
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01754

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science Practice (Infection Science)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Biomedical scientist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 6
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01755

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

### Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

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

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes

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

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

### Section 4: Outcome from first review

#### Recommendation of the visitors

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

#### Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number 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 08 June 2018.

## **2.1 The admissions process 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 ensure that the required information about the programme is available to potential applicants, so that they can make an informed decision about whether to take up a place on a programme.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors could not determine how the education provider would ensure that certain information would be communicated to potential applicants allowing them to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme. For this standard, the visitors understood that the responsibility of ensuring the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or health requirements was the responsibility of the employer. However, in discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the education provider would assess the criminal convictions checks with the other admission checks, before the learner starts the programme. Due to the difference in the information provided, the visitors could not see how learners are made aware of what the process is for assessing DBS and health checks or who is responsible for making those assessments. As such, the education provider will need to ensure that information provided to the learner regarding DBS and health checks is accurate so they can make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Additionally, information was provided to learners around the End Point Assessment (EPA) informing them that it needs to be passed before the learner can complete the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that that the EPA may be assessed internally or by an organisation independent from the education provider. As the education provider was unable to provide clarification about who was responsible for conducting the EPA, the visitors were unable to determine who held the responsibility for conducting the EPA. As such, the education provider will need to ensure that this information is clearly contained within the admissions information so the applicant can make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

In addition to this, from discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that details of the duration of individual apprenticeships would be finalised between the employer, education provider and learner. The visitors heard that learners may be asked to complete their practice-based learning at the employer for an extended length of time and that it would be dependent on how quickly a learner is able to satisfy the learning outcomes and complete the required learning for the programme. As such, the visitors were unable to see how applicants are made aware that they may be required to extend their practice-based learning in order to meet the learning outcomes for the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence of the information that is provided to applicants regarding the duration of practice-based learning and the possibility that this may be extended.

The visitors were unable to see how the education provider intends to communicate the following information to prospective applicants.

- the process associated with any Disclosure and Barring Service or health requirements and any associated costs to the learner;

- information about the end point assessment (EPA) for the programme, who would hold the responsibility of assessing this and where it would take place;
- the attendance requirements of the programme in the academic setting;
- the expectation that learners will undertake only one practice-based learning opportunity with one employer to complete this programme; and
- the required duration of individual learners' practice-based learning may be extended should learners not satisfy the requirements for successful completion of the programme by the expected end date.

Therefore, the visitors require further information, which demonstrates that applicants have the information they require to make an informed choice about the programme.

#### **2.4 The admissions process must assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there is a process in place for assessing the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided, the visitors understood that dealing with the criminal conviction checks is the responsibility of the employer. However, in discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the education provider would assess criminal convictions checks with the other admission checks, before the learner starts the programme. Due to the disparity in the information provided, the visitors were unclear what the process is for dealing with applicants' criminal convictions checks and who would be responsible for assessing applicants' suitability. Therefore, the visitors require further clarification as to the process in place for assessing the suitability of applicants regarding criminal conviction checks, and who is responsible for ensuring that the process is completed. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine whether this standard is met.

#### **2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there is a process in place for ensuring applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation provided, the visitors noted that it was the responsibility of the employer to make applicants aware of and ensure that applicants satisfy any health requirements. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that this is the responsibility of the education provider and would form part of the admission checks, which would be complete before the learner starts the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further clarification as to the process, which is in place that ensures applicants' suitability regarding health checks and who is responsible for ensuring the process is completed. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine how the admissions process ensures that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver the cellular pathology element of the programme.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unable to see who would be teaching the cellular pathology element of the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors learned that the education provider will use visiting lecturers to teach the cellular pathology element of the programme. As there is a small number of teaching staff involved in the programme for this pathway, the visitors noted that the visiting lecturers are necessary in order to deliver an effective programme. The visitors considered that, if for any reason, the visiting lecturers were not in place there would not be an adequate number of appropriately qualified experienced staff in place to deliver the programme. Therefore, the visitors require evidence, which demonstrates that the education provider has visiting lecturers in place, for the start of the programme. In this way, the visitors can determine whether there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

### **3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that subject areas are taught by staff with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise in cellular pathology.

**Reason:** This relates to the condition on SET 3.9. From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unable to see who would be teaching the cellular pathology element of the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors learned that the education provider would have visiting lecturers to teach the cellular pathology element of the programme. As there is a small number of teaching staff involved in the programme for this pathway, the visitors noted that the visiting lecturers are necessary in order to ensure that subject areas are delivered by educator with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise. Therefore, the visitors require evidence, which demonstrates that the education provider has visiting lecturers in place with the requisite specialist knowledge and experience to deliver the cellular pathology element of the programme.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The education provider must review the programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that some of the information contained within the documentation regarding HCPC requirements is inaccurate. Within the documentation, reference is made to HPC rather than HCPC. In addition to this, within the programme specification it states “completion of this programme entitles the graduate to join the HCPC register as a Biomedical Scientist”. However, this is not accurate as successful

completion of the programme gives the learner the eligibility to 'apply for registration' not entitlement to register with the HCPC. Consequently, the visitors require further evidence, which demonstrates that the documentation has been amended to reflect the correct information. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine whether the resources available to support learning in all settings are accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Condition:** The education provider must review the programme documentation to ensure the information regarding practice-based learning is accurate.

From the documentation, the visitors understood that an extra practice-based learning opportunity would take place in addition to the apprenticeship placement with the employer (practice education provider). However, in discussion with the programme team the visitors heard that this was a mistake and the education provider confirmed that the expectation is that learners will undertake only one practice-based learning opportunity with one employer to complete the programme. As such, the visitors require further evidence, which, demonstrates that the documentation accurately reflects information about how many practice-based learning opportunities the learners will be expected to complete for this programme. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

### **3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that there is a process in place to monitor equality and diversity policies for non-NHS practice-based learning.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation provided, the visitors noted that there is a university policy in place for all programmes. In discussions with the practice placement providers, the visitors heard that equality and diversity policies were in place for NHS practice-based learning. However, the visitors were unable to establish what equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored with regards to learners on practice based learning outside of the NHS. Therefore, the visitors require further clarification as to the process used to assess equality and diversity policies, which are implemented and monitored, in relation to learners, on non-NHS practice-based learning. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine whether this standard is met.

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

**Condition:** The programme team must provide further evidence of the formal protocols to obtain informed consent from learners when they participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, and the protocols for managing situations when students decline from participating.

**Reason:** From reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that the process for obtaining appropriate consent from service users was contained within the programme information. However, the education provider did not provide any information regarding

how they obtain consent from learners when they are asked to participate as service users in clinical teaching or what actions are taken when learners opt not to give consent. As such, the visitors were unclear about how the education provider manages the process and when, within this process, consent from learners would be obtained. To ensure this standard is met, the visitors require evidence of the process used to obtain consent from learners, including how records of consent are maintained and the process used when consent is not given.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the number of days the learners are required to attend both academic and practice-based learning.

**Reason:** From the programme documentation, the visitors noted that the attendance requirement for learners to attend sessions at the education provider was between one and three days per week. However, in discussions with the programme team, the visitors understood that learners would be expected to attend one day per week and the remainder of this would be spent in practice-based learning. As conflicting information was provided, the visitors could not see how applicants would have accurate information about the attendance requirements for the programme. Additionally, from discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that learners may be expected to attend practice-based learning for an extended period, depending on their progress. As such, the visitors were not clear how learners would know the attendance requirement for practice-based learning. The visitors therefore require further information, which clarifies the number of days learners are required to attend both academic and practice-based learning for this programme.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that assessments provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learner's progression and achievement.

**Reason:** From discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the EPA (End Point Assessment) may be assessed internally or by an organisation independent from the education provider. The visitors heard that the education provider intends to apply to the "Register of end-point assessment organisations" to enable them to conduct assessments internally at the education provider. However, the education provider could not confirm that this would be in place by the start of the programme. As the education provider was unable to provide clarification about who is responsible for conducting the EPA the visitors were unable to determine who is responsible for assessing the EPA. As such, they could not see how the assessments provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of progression and achievement of learners. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence, which demonstrates that this standard is met.

#### **6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that the assessment policies allow learners to understand what is expected of them at each stage in the programme.

**Reason:** On a review of the documentation, the visitors learned that specific exit awards are outlined in the programme specification, which can be obtained if a learner does not successfully complete the entire programme. However, the information provided was not clear in detailing the required criteria to attain each award. The visitors were unsure when a learner might be eligible for an exit award and the process for a learner to gain that award. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence, which demonstrates what criteria a learner must satisfy in order to be eligible for an exit award, when they may gain an exit award and the process for doing so. Additionally, from reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that the EPA (End Point Assessment) will be assessed at the end of the programme, and learners are required to pass the EPA before they can successfully complete the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the education provider agreed that they needed to update the documentation with information about the requirement for learners to pass the EPA. As such the visitors require further evidence of how the assessment policies clearly specify the requirements for learners to meet in order to achieve any exit awards and the full award for this programme. The visitors also require evidence, which demonstrates the process, which learners engage with in order to gain exit awards. In this way, the visitors can determine whether the assessment policies, clearly specify the requirements for progression at each stage of the programme.

#### **6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further information to show that the assessment methods are appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided, the visitors could not see what, learning outcomes are associated with the EPA, or the method for assessing the EPA. At the visit, the visitors heard that some learning outcomes would be linked to the EPA, however the visitors did not have sight of this information. As the visitors could not see which learning outcomes are associated with the EPA, they were unable to determine that the assessment method is appropriate, to and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes. As such, the visitors require further information to determine which learning outcomes are linked to the EPA assessment to determine whether the EPA is an appropriate assessment method to measuring those learning outcomes. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

#### **6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that they appoint an external examiner, which is appropriately qualified and experienced unless other arrangements are appropriate on the relevant part of the Register.

**Reason:** From reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted could not determine how an external examiner is appointed for the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the education provider has access to a list of prospective candidates within a database, which the education provider can contact and determine if they are interested in taking on the role of an external examiner. However, the visitors could not ascertain from this the criteria used to select an external examiner to ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications and experience and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, are on the relevant part of the Register. Therefore, the visitors require evidence of the process used to appoint an external examiner, which, ensures that the successful candidate meets the criteria as set out in this standard.

## 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 August 2018 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).