

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	AECC University College
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Radiography (Radiotherapy and Oncology), Full time BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging), Full time
Approval visit date	04 June 2020
Case reference	CAS-15930-X1W1Y3

Contents	
Section 1: Our regulatory approach.....	2
Section 2: Programme details.....	3
Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment.....	3
Section 4: Outcome from first review.....	4
Section 5: Visitors' recommendation.....	10
Section 6: Future considerations for the programme(s).....	10

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.

Through undertaking this process, we have noted areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes in section 6 of this report.

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:

Carly Elliott	Radiographer - Therapeutic radiographer
Stephen Boynes	Radiographer - Diagnostic radiographer
Patrick Armsby	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the virtual approval visit

There were other groups involved with the approval process as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Stewart Cotterill	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	AECC University College
Karen Piggott	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	AECC University College
Naomi Dickie	University Panel – External advisor	University of Portsmouth
Anthony Dennis	University Panel – External advisor	Kingston University and St George's, University of London

Victoria Wheeldon	University Panel – Internal member	AECC University College
Chris Derby	University Panel – Internal member	AECC University College
Stuart Mackay	The Society and College of Radiographers Panel Member	Professional body panel member - University of Liverpool
Dawn McDonald	The Society and College of Radiographers Panel Member	Professional body panel member - Mid-Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust
Helen White	The Society and College of Radiographers Panel Member	Professional body panel member - Birmingham City University

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Radiography (Radiotherapy and Oncology)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Radiographer
Modality	Therapeutic radiographer
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 10
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02220

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Radiographer
Modality	Diagnostic radiographer
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 10
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02221

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involved consideration of documentary evidence and a virtual approval visit, to consider whether the programme 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 ask for 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.

Type of evidence	Submitted	Comments
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes	
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes	
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes	
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes	
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes	
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes	
Internal quality monitoring documentation	Not Required	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provider decided to move this event to a virtual (or remote) approval visit. In the table below, we have noted the meetings held, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Facilities and resources	No	The visitors were provided with a virtual 'tour' of the facilities and resources available prior to the visit.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice educators	Yes	
Programme team	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 virtual 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 17 July 2020.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how there will be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Reason: To evidence this standard in the documentary submission the education provider indicated that the programme team would maintain regular contact with placement sites and ensure regular updates are disseminated through the teams. From this information, the visitors were not clear whether these actions mean that the education provider collaborated with practice education providers to ensure ongoing quality and effectiveness of the programme. They also could not see how their collaboration influenced the way the programme as a whole is designed and delivered.

At the visit, the visitors explored the nature of collaboration with the programme team and practice educators. In the meeting with the practice educators the visitors met with representatives from the Radiotherapy and Oncology programme but not with practice educators related to the Diagnostic Imaging programme. The practice educators explained that they had been in regular contact with the education provider and had been consulted around what they would expect and require from a band 5 radiographer. It was clear to the visitors that the Radiotherapy and Oncology practice educators were involved with the programme and there was a clear working relationship. However, the practice educators could not confirm how they would be feeding into continued development of the programme or how regular meetings would be occurring.

In the programme team meeting the visitors were told that practice education providers were involved in the initial design and delivery programme. They were also involved in reviewing the handbook at an initial stage. The visitors then questioned how they would be involved in the future of the programme and how they might be involved in review of the programme. The programme team stated that they would be open to involving practice educators in reviewing the programme content but did not confirm this would be happening.

The visitors understood there to be a working relationship with practice education providers. But following discussions with the programme team and practice educators they could not confirm that collaboration would be used to influence the way the programme as a whole is developed. We expect the arrangements for working with them to reflect an ongoing relationship not only when specific issue arise around practice-based learning. The education provider must clarify how they will ensure there is regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers. They must also

clarify how this collaboration will make sure they deliver ongoing quality and effectiveness as well as influencing the design of the programme as a whole.

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 indicate how they will communicate the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory

Reason: To evidence this standard in the documentary submission the education provider stated that there is a minimum attendance rate of 80 per cent for all learners in the academic setting. However, from the information provided, visitors were not clear of how learners would know what sessions were essential for progression through the programme, specifically in ensuring learners are prepared for practice based learning. In exploring this at the visit, the programme team confirmed that learners would be required to undertake sessions such as basic life support training prior to taking part in practice-based learning. They confirmed that this would be tied into tutorial sessions. The visitors noted that there was not information about this in the documentation, and could not confirm how learners would be aware of the mandatory nature of these sessions. Therefore, the education provider must clarify what the sessions that must be undertaken prior to practice-based learning will cover. They must also clarify how they will ensure learners are aware of the necessity to undertake these sessions and show how learners will catch up if the original sessions are missed.

5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Condition: The education provider must show how they will ensure that all learners have access to an appropriate range of practice-based learning that will ensure they meet the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency for radiographers.

Reason: To evidence this standard in the documentary submission the education provider highlighted the course specifications and placement handbook. The visitors noted that an appropriate range of practice-based learning was listed. However, they were unable to determine from these documents that all learners would have appropriate access to an appropriate range of practice based learning. The visitors also noted that the programmes would have shorter time in practice than other comparable programmes. They were unsure how this duration of practice-based learning would allow learners the appropriate time to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes and meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for Radiographers.

At the visit the visitors raised questions around the range of practice based learning available for learners and the rationale for the duration of practice-based learning in the programme. The programme team explained that they were confident that all learners would have the appropriate range of practice-based learning. They also explained that due to the number of learners they can be more flexible and create individualised plans of practice-based learning for them depending on their individual learning needs. The visitors could understand why they had adopted this approach but the education provider did not provide assurance on how this approach would definitely ensure that all learners have access to an appropriate range for an appropriate time. For example, the visitors could not determine how the education provider would ensure that learners

would not focus their practice-based learning in one specific area of their profession at the detriment of other areas.

In discussions around time spent in practice-based learning. The education provider indicated they would 'pre-load' learners with clinical skills that would commonly be taught in the practice setting, to ensure the time spent in practice was focused on the environment specific learning. The visitors could understand this approach but had not seen what skills learners would learn prior to taking part in practice-based learning in the documentation. As such they could not confirm that the current duration would allow for them to learn and demonstrate the appropriate skills in the practice setting. The education provider must clarify what will be contained in the 'pre-loading' of learners for practice-based learning. The education provider must show these sessions in conjunction with practice-based learning will ensure learners have appropriate duration to meet the learning outcomes associated with practice-based learning.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must show that practice educators will be appropriately trained for their role to support the learning needs of the first cohort of learners.

Reason: In the documentary submission the education provider highlighted a section in the course specification and narrative that practice educators would be expected to take part in an annual training and review session. The visitors were satisfied how this would be implemented as the programme runs. However, they were not clear how practice educators would be prepared and trained for the upcoming first year of the programme. At the visit they enquired how practice educators would be trained in time for the first cohort of learners. In the programme team meeting the visitors were told that a practice educators training had been designed and would be carried out before learners take part in practice-based learning. The education provider currently has not selected a date for this training day nor were they able to provide information about the content of the day. As such the visitors could not confirm that practice educators would be appropriately trained in time for the first cohort of learners taking part in this programme. The education provider must show how the content of the training day will be appropriate for the programmes. They must also how they will ensure that all practice educators will be appropriately trained in time for the first cohort of learners, including any practice educators that are unable to attend the training day.

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.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should formalise the information provided to learners to ensure they are able to make an informed decision about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: In the documentary submission and viewing the website visitors noted that the information provide for learners was fairly generic and not radiography specific. In discussions at the visit the visitors were told this university policy and they would be able to update the information at a later date to reflect the appropriate information. They also confirmed that information around health and criminal conviction checks would be provided to learners at open days and interviews. The visitors were therefore satisfied that learners would be appropriately informed to take up a place on the programme. However, they are recommending that the education provider formalises the information they provided to the visitors, to ensure appropriate clarity for learners.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure future involvement of service users in teaching is embedded effectively in the programme and they are given the appropriate support in this role.

Reason: To evidence this standard in the documentary submission the visitors could see that service users would be involved in interviews of applicants. They were also consulted around the structure and documentation for the programme. The visitors considered this to meet the threshold for the standard. However, at the programme team outlined their early plans to involve service users in the teaching portions of the programme. The visitors considered these plans to be appropriate and recommend the education provider ensures that service users are appropriately prepared and supported in carrying out this role in the teaching of the programme.

3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure that learners are aware that aegrotat awards for the programme do not lead to eligibility for admission to the register by stating this in the student handbook.

Reason: In the documentation the visitors noted that the education provider had not been explicit about aegrotat awards and how they related to eligibility for registration. In discussions with the programme team the visitors confirmed this would be appropriately communicated to learners when it was relevant. The visitors recommend that this information is formalised in programme documentation for learners to ensure maximum clarity.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: The education provider should include all indicative content in module descriptors to ensure that learners are clear on the proficiencies they will need to meet in the programme.

Reason: Prior to the visit the visitors were unclear on how the programme would ensure the following standards of proficiency (SOPs) would be covered in the programme; 5.1, 7.3, 9.2, 9.3, 13.10, 13.16, 14.27, 14.44, 15.7, 15.9, 15.10. The programme team indicated indicative content that was not present in the module descriptors. In discussions with the programme team the visitors were clear that these SOPs would be appropriately covered for learners. The visitors recommend formalising these discussions and ensure the module descriptors accurately reflect the content within them.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Recommendation: The education provider should formalise their plans for learning with physiotherapy and chiropractic learners.

Reason: In the documentary submission the visitors could see informal plans of how learners would interact with learners and professionals in other relevant professions. At the visit they explored with the programme team how much further the plans had developed. The programme team confirmed were more advanced plans for learners to take part in a professionalism unit with chiropractic and Physiotherapy learners. The visitors were satisfied this opportunity would be appropriate to meet the standard. However, they recommend these opportunities are formalised and reflected in the programme documentation.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: For the diagnostic radiography programme the education provider should ensure the language in the clinical competencies accurately reflect the standards of proficiency for diagnostic radiographers.

Reason: When assessing the practice assessment competencies the visitors noted that learners would be expected to observe magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and ultrasound techniques. The standards of proficiency (SOPs) require Diagnostic radiographers to be able to assist, rather than observe, in ultrasound and MRI procedures (see SOPs 14.32 & 14.33). The programme team explained how the teaching and assessment would be carried out in relation to these standards, they confirmed that this was just misleading language and learners would be required to assist rather than just observe. The visitors were satisfied with this response and the programme team confirmed how and recommend that the appropriate documentation is reflected of the language of the SOPs.

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

Recommendation: For the therapeutic radiography programme the education provider should ensure the clinical assessment criteria is detailed to show the competencies required to ensure that assessments remain objective for learners.

Reason: In the documentary submission the visitors noted that the assessment criteria for clinical skills was more detailed for the diagnostic programme and related

specifically to competencies. In discussion with the programme team the visitors were told that the therapeutic radiography assessment criteria would assess the relevant clinical competencies but the documentation was not reflective of this because it was based on another institution's criteria. The visitors were satisfied that learners would be assessed objectively but recommend that the documentation is updated appropriately to reflect the detail provided by the programme team.

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 20 August 2020 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).

Section 6: Future considerations for the programme(s)

We include this section to note areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes. Education providers do not need to respond to this section at this time, but should consider whether to engage with the HCPC around these areas in the future.

In their review of the programme the visitors were unsure how the time spent in practice-based learning would be sufficient for learners to meet all the relevant learning outcomes and standards of proficiency (SOPs). The education provider indicated that learners would carry out clinical skills in the university setting to supplement the time in practice-based learning. As such the visitors considered the standard to be met. However, they recommend that the duration of practice-based learning is considered in future assessments to ensure that learners continue to meet the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency for Radiographers.

Additionally, in their review of the programme the visitors were unclear of formal involvement of practice educators in the design and delivery of the programme.. Subsequently, the education provider submitted a plan of how they will collaborate with the practice education providers in the future. The visitors were therefore able to see that practice educators would be involved in the review of the programme moving forward. The visitors therefore recommend that future assessments consider how the partnership with practice education providers influences the way the programme as a whole is designed and delivered.