HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Newcastle University
Name of programme(s)	Master of Dietetics, Full time
	BSc (Hons) Dietetics, Full time
Approval visit date	23-24 January 2020
Case reference	CAS-15021-L1Q9Z0

Contents

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:

Sarah Illingworth	Dietitian
Fiona McCullough	Dietitian
Joanne Watchman	Lay
Patrick Armsby	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.

Simon Pallett	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Newcastle University – Special Projects Manager, Faculty of humanities and Social Sciences
Janice Trewick	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Newcastle University – Governance and Data Team

Menna Wyn-Wright	British Dietetic Association (BDA) assessor	BDA – Professional Body
Amanda Avery	BDA assessor	BDA – Professional Body
Jane Wilson	BDA assessor	BDA – Professional Body
Thomas Allen	CORU Executive	CORU – Observing HCPC process.

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Master of Dietetics
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Dietitian
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 21 across both programmes
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02161

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Dietetics
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Dietitian
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 21 across both programmes
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02162

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

The BSc (Hons) Dietetics programme is an exit award for the Master of Dietetics programme. Learners will not be directly enrolled onto the BSc (Hons) Dietetics programme.

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	Yes	

procedures, and contractual agreements		
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

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes
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 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 06 March 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: In the documentary submission the education provider submitted minutes of meetings with practice-education providers and an example of a bi-annual newsletter that would be provided to practice-education providers. The education provider also indicated in their narrative around this standard that ongoing collaboration would take place in the form of an annual conference with other local education providers and attendance at an annual Northern Trainer Network meeting. The visitors questioned how this meeting would influence how the programme as a whole is designed and delivered. The visitors were told by the practice educators they were expecting to meet with the education provider roughly four times a year to discuss the operational and strategic delivery of the course. This was at odds with the information provided by the education provider. The visitors noted that the education provider and practice-education providers had different expectations of the arrangements for regular collaboration. This also indicated to the visitors that the future collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers had not been finalised. As the visitors were unable to confirm the education providers approach and so they could not confirm that this standard has been met. The education provider must clarify how it ensures regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers, to ensure the programme is continuously improving.

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.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how they can strengthen the implementation of their service user and carer policy, and should consider how they can increase the range of service users and carers that are involved in the programme.

Reason: The visitors met with representatives of three service user and carer groups. They confirmed that they are currently involved with other programmes at the education provider and will be involved in the admissions process for the programme. In the programme team meeting, the visitors were told that the education provider has plans to incorporate recurring service users through the programme. Building on this service user's narrative through the years. However, the programme team stated this has not yet been finalised. While the visitors considered to be met at threshold level they recommend that the education provider implements service user and carer involvement through the programme to enhance the learning experience for learners.

3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how it will ensure reasonable adjustments can be made for learners in the practice-based learning setting.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that this standard was met at threshold based on the information provided in the programme documentation and discussions at the visit. The visitors noted there were many centralised university policies and procedures to ensure that learners are appropriately supported as they take part in the programme. The visitors were also told that the education provider ensures learners have a personal tutor as a first point of contact should they have any need for additional or unique support. The visitors considered this to be an effective system but also to be reactionary. In the case of learners who would need reasonable adjustments to be made the visitors could see that arrangements could be made with relative ease in the university setting. However, as practice-based learning is off-site, implementing reasonable adjustments might be more difficult. The programme team outlined how they would ensure these adjustments with practice education providers and outlined their collaborative approach. The visitors were satisfied that this would meet the threshold for this standard. However, the visitors recommend that the education provider considers formalising their approach, to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be implemented for learners in the practice-based learning setting so these experiences are meeting their learning needs.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how it will ensure that practice educators will be appropriately trained without a reliance on other education providers.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that this standard was met at threshold based on the information provided in the programme documentation. The education provider confirmed that they have collaborated with other providers in the region to ensure consistency of training for practice educators. They also confirmed that some practice educators may not specifically be trained by the education provider but by other providers in the region. The visitors understood that the training had been homogenised across the providers so there would be consistency. However, the visitors recommend that the education provider considers developing a contingency plan to ensure the relevant training remains in place should another provider withdraw from running their programme.

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 24 March 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.