

Approval process quality report

Education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Applied Physiotherapy, (Work based learning)
Date Assessment commenced	08/11/2021
Visitor recommendation made	17/12/2021
Case reference	CAS-01093-C3X6L9

Summary of findings from this assessment

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme detailed in this report meets our standards of education and training. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

The outcomes of this process were as follows:

- Further Stage 1 assessment was not required based on the new programme(s) being proposed for delivery.
- The visitors recommended the programme(s) be approved as all programme level standards were met through their Stage 2 assessment.

The Education and Training Committee will now meet to consider the visitors recommendations and make a decision regarding programme approval.

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Section 1: Background information

Who we are

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.

Our standards

We approve institutions and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which 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.

Our standards are divided into two levels based on their relevance to the institution and programme(s). The following considerations were made when splitting standards between institution and programme level:

- Where accountability best sits, with either the accountable person for the institution or programme
- How the standard is worded, with references to the education provider and processes often best sitting at the institution level, and references to the programme or profession often best sitting at the programme level
- We have preferred seeking assurance at the institution level, to fit with our intention to put the institution at the centre of our quality assurance model.

Our approach to quality assuring education

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of institution and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards

Institutions and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

The approval process

We take a staged approach to quality assurance, as we need to understand practices which will support delivery of all programmes within an institution, prior to assessing the programme level detail. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we assess to be assured that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)
- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the process we will initially review the proposal and then design our assessment based on the issues we find. As such the assessment methods will be different based on the issues which arise in each case.

How we make 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 design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. 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 the 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](#).

Section 2: Our assessment

Stage 1 assessment: The institution

Education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Key contact	Dave Clarke

As part of the initiation of the process the education provider indicated that the proposed programme would be part of the University of the West of England, Bristol. This institution is well established with HCPC and currently delivers approved programmes in:

- Occupational Therapy;
- Physiotherapy;
- Radiography;
- Radiotherapy and Oncology;
- Paramedic ;
- Psychology; and
- Music Therapy

In previous standards assessments of these programmes, visitors have established the institution level standards are met. The provider has also demonstrated this through ongoing monitoring carried out by the HCPC.

As part of the provider's definition of their institution, they have defined the policies, procedures and processes that apply to the programmes delivered within it. These relate to the institution level standards we set which ensure the following areas are managed effectively:

Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information for applicants• Assessing English language, character, and health• Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)• Equality, diversity and inclusion
Governance, leadership and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective programme delivery• Effective staff management• Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level
Quality, monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic components, including how curricula are kept up to date• Practice components, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments• Learner involvement• Service user and carer involvement
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support• Ongoing professional suitability• Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)• Equality, diversity and inclusion

Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivity • Progression and achievement • Appeals
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Assurance that institution level standards are met

As part of this stage we considered how the proposed programmes fit into the named institution by considering any notable changes to the policies, procedures and processes related to the areas above.

We considered how the proposed programmes are assimilated with the management of existing approved programmes in the institution. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in way that was consistent with the definition of their institution. On this basis, we were satisfied it is appropriate for the programme to sit as part of The School of Health and Social Wellbeing and take assurance the institution level standards will continue to be met by its introduction.

Stage 2 assessment: The programmes

Education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Accountable person (for the programmes)	Dave Clarke
Programme	BSc (Hons) Applied Physiotherapy
Profession	Physiotherapy
Mode of study	Work based learning
Programme duration	48 months
Learner numbers	30
Intakes per year	1
Start date	24/01/2022

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

We also considered other sources of information, intelligence, and data points as noted in the table below:

Performance area	Data point / comparison	Benchmark	Data	Score	Executive comments
Performance indicator	Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	491	544	-0.02	This data point is for all the existing programmes within the institution, for the last academic year. This has resulted in a negative score because the actual total learner numbers is higher than the benchmark value. This occurred across the existing programmes, within this institution.
Performance indicator	Aggregation of percentage not continuing	7.9	7.5	0.00	We collected this data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The score has been rounded off to the nearest decimal point, thus leading to the the benchmark score. This indicated the education provider is doing well in this area.
Performance indicator	Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	95.3	95.6	0.00	We collected this data from the HESA. The score, indicates the education provider has achieved the benchmark score. This indicated the education provider is doing well in this area.
Teaching quality	TEF award	N/A	Gold	0.00	The data point 'Gold' is the highest score in this area. This indicates the education provider is performing well in this area.
Learner / graduate satisfaction	NSS overall satisfaction score (Q27)	73.61	77.07	0.05	We collect this data from the Office for Students (OfS). This score indicates the education provider is performing well in this area.
Total				0.98	This overall score is considered a very high score as it is close to the maximum score of 1. This indicates the education

					provider is performing very well overall.
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Visitors appointed to undertake this assessment

We appointed the following panel to assess the above information against our programme level standards:

Registrant visitors	Carol Rowe - Physiotherapist
	Fleur Kitsell - Physiotherapist

Assessment of the proposal

Initial review:

- The visitors reviewed the education provider's submission and considered their approach to each standard.
- This first review culminated in a virtual HCPC meeting in which the visitors discussed and made decisions around the standards they considered to be met and the areas they required further information around.
- Following the finalisation of areas to explore the visitors discussed and finalised the most appropriate quality activity to undertake this investigation.

Quality activity: Email response to Questions

We design our assessment to be proportionate and appropriate to the issues identified and to seek input from relevant stakeholders when necessary. We considered it was appropriate and proportionate to consider additional information via email response to questions.

The themes we explored are as follows:

Theme	Reason for email response to questions
Ensuring applicants are made aware of the selection and entry criteria, as part of the admissions process	Visitors were unable to find information regarding admissions requirement for this proposed programme. As such they queried what information will be made available to applicants, with regards to the selection and entry criteria as part of the admissions process.
Ensuring there are adequate experienced and qualified staff to support learners, for the delivery of the proposed programme	Visitors wanted to explore whether the staff who are teaching on the existing full time BSc provision of the Physiotherapy programme, are also going to be teaching on the proposed degree apprenticeship programme as well.

From their detailed review of the responses submitted, the visitors were satisfied with the clarification provided to address all of the queries identified above.

Summary of visitor findings

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

The visitors were satisfied that the programme aligned with the level of qualification expected for entry onto the HCPC Register. On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area.

SET 2: Programme admissions

Through the initial submission followed by quality activity, the education provider confirmed the selection and entry criteria for the proposed programme including how it will be made available to applicants. Visitors considered this information appropriate and suitable for applicants set at right level, for entry to the programme. On this basis and from the queries raised during the quality activity, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

The education provider demonstrated the availability of sufficient and adequate resources, including digital and physical resources that would effectively support learners in the delivery of the proposed programme. The education provider also demonstrated the profile of their programme team, along with providing clear information regarding their qualifications and experience. It was mentioned clearly in the documentation that two additional staff had been recruited to provide support on the proposed degree apprenticeship programme. Through the quality activity, the education provider confirmed existing staff on the BSc provision will also be providing support to learners on the proposed degree apprenticeship programme. On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 4: Programme design and delivery

The visitors considered the programme curriculum to be appropriate for learners to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) and be suitably prepared for practice-based learning. They also noted learning outcomes were clearly mapped to the SOPs. Visitors also noted expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics were explained clearly within the documents. Visitors also considered the evidence provided demonstrated a clear integration of theory and practice, with a clear linkage between the two. On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 5: Practice-based learning

Visitors noted practice-based learning blocks are spread throughout the programme to enable integration of academic learning into practice and vice versa. Additionally, visitors were satisfied how the education provider will ensure there will be adequate practice educators with the necessary knowledge and experience to support learners on this programme. On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

SET 6: Assessment

The visitors noted the assessment strategy aligned with the curriculum which would enable learners to demonstrate the learning outcomes and SOPs. Additionally, visitors considered the assessment policies were clear in terms of progression and achievement on the respective programmes. On this basis, there were no conditions set in relation to this area of the standards.

Section 3: The visitors' recommendations

Based on these findings the visitors made the following recommendations to the Education and Training Committee:

Programme approval

The programme is recommended for approval, without conditions.

Section 4: Committee decision on approval

- We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 31/01/2022.