

## Approval process report

Sheffield Hallam University, Therapeutic Radiography, 2021/22

### **Executive summary**

Process stage – sharing visitor findings (pre-quality activities), covering:

- Current process stage – Visitors have completed their assessment of how the new BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography (Degree Apprenticeship) programme meets our Stage 2 standards of education and training at threshold level.
- Summary of key findings – In their initial review the visitors saw sufficient evidence that demonstrates how the design and delivery of the programme as well as its assessment align with our education standards. However, there was insufficient evidence in the education provider's submission to demonstrate effective collaboration with practice providers to ensure practice-based learning capacity. The visitors were also unclear about how the education provider would ensure adequate numbers of appropriately qualified staff both in teaching and in practice-based learning. These were further explored through quality activity, where the visitors requested further documentary evidence. The quality activity was also used to explore:
  - how practice educators would access resources to support learning;
  - effectiveness of the teaching and learning methods used; and
  - how the structure of practice-based learning would support the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Following the quality activity, the visitors were satisfied that all standards have been met and recommended approval of the programme.

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## Section 1: About this assessment

### About us

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.

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

### Our standards

We approve education providers 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 regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters 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; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers 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

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance 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 approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

### **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 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. 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 takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### **The assessment panel for this review**

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Jane Day	Lead visitor, Therapeutic radiographer
Mark Widdowfield	Lead visitor, Diagnostic radiographer
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Officer

## **Section 2: Institution-level assessment**

### **The education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers 18 HCPC-approved programmes across seven professions. It is a higher education institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1994.

The institution has maintained a high quality in their delivery of HCPC approved programmes over the past few decades. As a large HEI, all their programmes have consistently met our standards through engagements with our monitoring processes and no significant issues have been identified from any of their recent engagements with our processes.

## Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Arts therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2022
	Dietitian	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2019
	Occupational therapy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1994
	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2015
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2017
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1997
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2002
<b>Post-registration</b>	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2014

## Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	895	885	2022	The total number of learners currently enrolled on all HCPC approved provision is within the approved range so we are reassured that the existing programmes are adequately resourced.

Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3	1	2021	A score of 1% compared with the benchmark of 3% means this provider has a very small percentage of learners not continuing their education at this institution.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93	96	2021	This data collected from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that graduates from this institution do very well upon leaving the institution. This implies that compared with other providers with similar learner numbers and mode of delivery, the majority of Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) graduates either go into employment or further study.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2021	A silver TEF award is good. Although there is room for improvement to get a gold award.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	74.1	73.8	2021	This score is currently below the benchmark. Although this is just one of the several other areas we look at to inform our decision making, this could imply that there is a significant number of learners dissatisfied with their learning at this institution.

### The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full

partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

### Admissions

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Information for applicants** – In their Establishing institution baseline document, the education provider highlighted relevant policies, procedures and processes that demonstrate how information is made available to applicants to help in their decision-making. These policies provide the basis for practice across the institution. They covered several areas including admissions, apprenticeships, assessment and fitness to practice. A Term and conditions for Full Time Undergraduate UK, EU and International applicants; Apprenticeship Delivery Guide; Student Fitness to Practise regulations documents were all listed as institution-wide policies that apply to all programmes at this institution. We understood that the terms and conditions document provides details on contracts, admissions to the university, provision of courses and services, the regulations, tuition fees, deposits, debts and refunds, liability, and queries/ complaints.

As the new programme is a degree apprenticeship programme, we understood that the Apprenticeship Delivery Guide provides programme specific information and demonstrates the involvement of the Employer Partnership Manager who works with employers and applicants in advance of applications coming into the University.

From the information provided, it is clear that new programme aligns with the institution's existing policies and processes around information provided to applicants to assist them in deciding about the programme.

- **Assessing English language, character, and health** – the education provider highlighted that the online prospectus contains information on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for learners where their first language is not English. This also includes information on Sheffield Hallam University Pre-sessional English course to support learners. Information on the HCPC's minimum requirements for registration was also covered.

Information around Occupational health screening, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Criminal Record Check process was also covered. As an institution, the education provider highlighted that they are currently working with their occupational health provider to reflect the changing guidance around CV19 vaccination. We have a clear understanding that all of these processes apply to the new BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography (Degree Apprenticeship) programme.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** – The education provider noted that decisions on whether prior learning may be accepted towards the credit requirements for a Sheffield Hallam University award are academic decisions. Each College's Academic Board (or delegated authority) is responsible for considering and approving Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) matters relating to individual programmes of study, including the verification, suitability, validation and delegation of authority to Admissions Tutors and/or Course Leaders to approve RPL claims in accordance with the principles. For the degree apprenticeship provision this follows an initial skills scan. If significant new learning is not identified then the apprentice can RPL and their individual study plan is adjusted.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – The education provider noted the University Strategy and Hallam Values; Sheffield Hallam Equality Objectives and The Equality Objectives - 2021–2024 among several of the relevant policies, procedures and processes that apply to all programmes delivered at this institution. It was made clear that these would also apply to the new programme.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

#### Management and governance

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register<sup>1</sup>** – The online prospectus allows applicants to investigate the specifics of the individual programmes. These have a common layout and cover course summary, how you learn, future careers, where will I study, entry requirements, modules, fees and funding and how to apply. This section also contains information on eligibility for application for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The Apprenticeship Delivery Guide outlines an additional process of apprentices having quarterly reviews conducted with a work-based learning coach employed by the institution. The education provider also has an Establishment of academic and professional services staff which provides the staffing resource for the delivery of University activity.
- **Sustainability of provision** – The education provider's Strategic Portfolio Board oversees the future development of the institution's portfolio and works with College Portfolio Groups to guide the development of programmes which fulfil the strategic intent of the institution. It was clear that the new programme also falls within this practice and would benefit from the institutional processes and procedures.
- **Effective programme delivery** – It was noted that the Staffing policies and Recruitment of staff demonstrates how the Head of Department works with

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<sup>1</sup> This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed



the Head of Finance to review the overall establishment, consider developing business needs and submission of business cases for staffing resources, both replacement and new. Recruitment and selection of staff follows three principles, firstly equality, diversity and inclusion secondly a positive candidate experience and thirdly effective selection. The recruitment process is managed through the Core Portal e-recruitment system used alongside recruitment guidance on the staff intranet. This would work in a similar way for the new programme.

- **Effective staff management and development** – The education provider noted that for each of the professional areas there is an ongoing review process of the skills mix, development needs and succession planning. Staff learning and development is centrally co-ordinated by the Human resources Operational Development team. In addition, there is support for staff apprenticeships, health wellbeing and welfare, leadership, career development, digital skills and job shadowing. These processes would also apply to the new BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography (Degree Apprenticeship) programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** – Sheffield Hallam University has a range of partnerships across the world. They have different committees set up to oversee the creation and management of educational partnerships. These include the UK Partnerships Committee and the Global Partnerships Committee. There is an Employer Partnerships Managers group that works with employers and supports contracts in relation to Apprenticeships and CPD. Regular meetings with HEE apprenticeship leads occur and with employer stakeholders. This arrangement will also work for the new programme.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Academic quality** – We understood from the information provided that the education provider has a robust Academic Quality Framework for safeguarding academic standards and improving the quality of the learner experience. This covers:
  - approval of new provision and the criteria for assessing quality and standards;
  - regulations and procedures for assessment of taught programmes and research degrees;
  - guidance documentation such as handbooks for external examiners and link tutors, and the code of practice for research supervisors and students ; and
  - feedback from internal and external stakeholders such as responses to the National Student Survey and Quality Assurance Agency institutional audits.

The Academic Quality Framework will also apply to the new provision.

- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** – The education provider noted several policies including Health and Safety, Audit, Placement evaluations, Reporting concerns, Concerns, Data protection and Inclusivity. It is clear how the education provider works with placement providers to ensure safety in practice placement for all learners. Information on how learners are supported to report concerns in practice-based learning was made clear and the new programme will also benefit from these arrangements.
- **Learner involvement** – Sheffield Hallam University has policies and processes that ensure learners are involved in programme design, delivery and management. Learners are involved in the development of programmes through workshops to generate discussion and ideas about programme design and then at a later point to feedback about that design. Learners are involved in programme management at departmental level as student representatives in Departmental Leadership Team meetings. Learners on the new programme will also be involved in similar ways.
- **Service user and carer involvement** – The Hallam Model is a university wide strategy to support an applied curriculum design framework applied consistently across the University. The education provider is in their final stage of developing a refreshed Patient and Public Involvement Teaching and Learning Framework which will provide clarity on the range of ways service users and carers can work in partnership with them in the following areas: Curriculum design and validation; Recruitment of students; Curriculum delivery (teaching and assessment); and Curriculum evaluation and review. It is understood that this will also apply to the new degree apprenticeship provision.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

### Learners

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Support** – The education provider has existing frameworks to support all learners. Some of which include Hallam Help Framework, Academic Advice Framework and Student Charter. There are also policies that support learners' mental health and wellbeing. Learners on the new degree apprenticeship programme will also have access to this support.
- **Ongoing suitability** – There are several regulations in place to ensure ongoing suitability of learners. These include:
  - Disciplinary Regulations for Students
  - Academic Conduct Regulation
  - Student Fitness to Practise Regulations
  - Regulation: withdrawal due to incapacity to study
 The Apprenticeship Delivery Guide outlines an additional process of apprentices having quarterly reviews conducted with a work-based learning coach employed by the university.

- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL / E)** – The education provider noted that the Hallam model is a university wide strategy built around principles of engage, thrive, challenge and collaborate. They explained that interprofessional education (IPE) is introduced at the start of all programmes and works alongside the careers and employability offer where learners are guided to recognise the skills they develop by learning with, from and about each other.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – The education provider adopts several strategies and policies that allow for inclusion. They also noted a learning package available to all staff that allows them to consider a range of topics such as protected characteristics, safe and inclusive online environments, supporting international students, disabled students and being a mature student. These would equally be available to staff involved in the new programme.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

### Assessment

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Objectivity** - The education provider noted several policies they have in place to ensure objectivity in assessments. Some of these include: Standard Assessment Regulations 2021/22, Exemptions from the Standard Assessment Regulations 2021/22, and Academic Awards Framework. The roles and responsibilities of external examiners as well as regulations around learners' conduct are all clearly laid out. The policies and procedures are applied across the whole of the institution including internal and external moderation at programme level. The External Examiner processes contribute to the maintenance of threshold academic standards through the annual appointment of, engagement with, and responding to External Examiners.
- **Progression and achievement** – The online prospectus illustrates all the programmes providing eligibility for application for registration with the HCPC. There is clear guidance provided on absence reporting. Placement learning expectations are also well laid out and Student fitness to practice regulations apply to learners studying on programmes which lead to a professional qualification where there are statutory or professional or regulatory body requirements relating to health or behaviour or attitudes. All of these will apply to the new degree apprenticeship programme.
- **Appeals** – The education provider highlighted that policies such as the Student Complaints Policy and procedure, Appeals Policy and Procedure are all institution wide policies that ensure learners' appeals are dealt with in a fair and timely way.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

## Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

**Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:** None

## Section 3: Programme-level assessment

### Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography (Degree Apprenticeship)	DL (Distance learning)	Therapeutic radiographer	15 (one cohort per year)	21/03/2022

### Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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.

### Performance data

We also considered data points from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Office for Students (OfS) in compiling evidence and setting the context to assist visitors in their decision-making.

### Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

## Quality theme 1 – Collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers

**Area for further exploration:** How the education provider ensures regular and effective collaboration between them and their practice education providers.

In their documentary review, the visitors noted that the information provided to evidence regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education provider referred to “students” rather than apprentices. For example, the Example Model National Partnership Agreement document clearly outlines the roles of the parties in terms of placement and the agreement. However, there was no mention of apprentices identified within the document. The document consistently referred to “students”.

The visitors also noted that the Placement Learning Partnership Group Meeting Minutes submitted indicate that the radiotherapy and oncology representative was not present at the meeting therefore, they were unclear about their involvement.

The information given around the work-based learning coach (WBLC) role was about assessment and support of the apprentice, not around collaboration with the placement site/employer.

The visitors also noted that the Placement Learning Partnership Group document did not refer to apprentices. Given that apprentices are employees of a Trust, the visitors could not determine the programme/institutional changes/direction in engaging with employers with apprentices rather than placement providers.

Also included in the evidence submitted was a course management committee meeting agenda, however, it was not clear how this will be used for collaboration.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** In order to gain a better understanding of how partnership will work between the education provider and practice education providers, the visitors requested further documentary evidence. For example, the visitors considered that the education provider could submit a set of minutes that indicate attendance from the education provider is occurring regularly. They also considered that a schedule of the dates of the meetings to ensure that they are planned in advance would also be useful. Information that demonstrates how the WBLC will be used to foster collaboration between placement provider and the education provider was also considered useful. The visitors also requested to know what the plan is for collaboration with placement sites

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their response, the education provider explained that the College Director of Placements holds regular meetings with placement coordinators from all Trusts where she represents all allied health profession (AHP) provision. We understood that the director works closely with the clinical leads and they meet on a 6-8 weekly basis. The education provider also explained and provided evidence that demonstrates how work based learning coaches are recruited, trained and allocated workloads to support the mentors in the workplace and the apprentice. Therefore, the visitors were clear on the work of the WBLC as a liaison between the education provider and the employer. The education provider also explained that any

site which takes apprentices will have a service level agreement set up initiated by the Director of Placements for the College.

The NHS Education Contract submitted clearly articulates the expectations of both the education provider and placement provider. The visitors also noted that the website will be updated to reflect this programme once approval has been gained. In addition, discussion of hierarchy in terms of collaboration highlighted the collaboration at different levels.

### Quality theme 2 – Availability and capacity of practice-based learning

**Area for further exploration:** Ensuring availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

The visitors saw that the education provider had demonstrated how they have involved the Trust partners in the development of the programme through the regional stakeholder events. However, there was no documentation that demonstrates how capacity is managed for all learners.

In their Example Model National Partnership Agreement, the education provider highlighted the expectations of the placement site. The roles listed in the placement handbook also highlighted responsibilities but not the processes. Audit was mentioned in the agreement, but no example audit is given. The visitors noted there was no process of how the provider will ensure available practice-based learning for all learners, from the evidence supplied.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested further documentary evidence to demonstrate the process that is in place to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider confirmed that audits take place every two years and they submitted further evidence that demonstrates how challenges around practice-based learning capacity are dealt with through the relevant processes. The visitors understood that the 3-way review process between the workplace mentor, work based learning coach (WBLC) and the apprentice provides an opportunity for the apprentice to raise concerns. Regular meetings with the course team including the Course leader and the apprentice, academic adviser would also facilitate this.

### Quality theme 3 – Adequate staffing with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise

**Area for further exploration:** How the programme ensures adequate staffing with assurance that subject areas will be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

In the evidence submitted by the education provider, the visitors saw the staff curriculum vitae (CVs) supplied and that they all have a recognised learning and teaching qualification. However, the visitors noted that some staff CVs were missing as the total whole time equivalent (WTE) did not add up to the 12.6 that was stated. The visitors noted that the staff CVs appeared to indicate that they have the

specialist knowledge and expertise to deliver the subject area. However, as the education provider did not submit CVs for all staff that will be involved in the programme, the visitors could not determine whether they will be adequate or whether all specialist areas were adequately covered.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested that the education provider provide CVs of all staff that would be teaching on the programme. They considered that it would also help to have further information on how the available staff would manage current learners as well as the apprentice learners. The visitors considered that all CVs must be sighted to ensure that all subject areas are covered by the staff employed at Sheffield Hallam University, noting that visiting lectures are employed.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors were presented with all staff CVs and the evidence demonstrates there are adequate members of staff to support the programmes being offered. From seeing the CVs, the visitors were also reassured that sufficient specialist knowledge and expertise to deliver the programme.

#### Quality theme 4 – Access to resources to support learning

**Area for further exploration:** How the education provider ensures resources to support learning are accessible to practice educators.

The visitors saw that the education provider has numerous systems in place to facilitate learner engagement. The evidence provided indicated that the resources are for the existing BSc (Hons) and MSc programmes but nothing about the degree apprenticeship.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested additional evidence that specifically shows how practice-based staff are given access to learning resources.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors were given access to an online presentation by the education provider where the education provider demonstrated how educators are supported to access resources. The education provider noted specific stakeholder engagement that focus on key themes including finance, managing expectations, staff training, ensuring consistency, support and communication and integration. Therefore, the visitors were reassured that practice educators will be able to access the information they need to support the required learning and teaching activities on the programme.

#### Quality theme 5 – Effective use of practice- based learning

**Area for further exploration:** How the education provider demonstrates that practice-based learning is integral to the programme.

In their evidence, the education provider mentioned that apprentices will have 80% off time being protected but there was no indication of how this will actually work and what it means for the learner experience.

The visitors saw clear articulation of the importance of practice in the proposal document and within the course descriptor. However, without knowing when clinical placements take place or are organised, it was difficult to see where the practice-based learning sits.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested further clarification on how the apprentice learners will learn their new clinical skills/meet their competency statements.

In their mapping, the education provider had mentioned a rota that shows what the learners would learn in practice-based learning and how this will align with the learning outcomes of the programme. The visitors considered it would be useful to sight this piece of evidence to be able to determine how practice-based learning will be used effectively on the programme.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider highlighted within their presentation their delivery philosophy for the programme. This showed how the education provider will utilise a blend of synchronous and asynchronous delivery through a variety of approaches. The visitors saw how the education provider provides facilitation and opportunities for apprentices to build a community. The visitors also saw the process of assessment for apprentice learners with an example of the timeframes given. This reassured the visitors that practice-based learning is integral and will be used effectively on the programme to prepare learners for future practice.

#### Quality theme 5 – Staffing in practice-based learning

**Area for further exploration:** How the education provider ensures adequate staffing in practice-based learners and how suitability of practice educators is determined.

The documentation provided stated the support that is provided by the academic team and also cites the course management review meetings between employers and practice partners as a mechanism for flagging issues regarding practice. However, it was not evident that there is a robust mechanism in place to ensure adequate staffing in practice-based learning.

Audit was mentioned in the agreement, but no example audit is given. The documentation provided indicated that mentors have access to training. However, it was unclear the nature or frequency of the training.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested evidence from the placement providers of their mechanism to ensure that there are adequate numbers and appropriately qualified staff involved in practice-based learning. They also requested evidence of the processes the practice providers have to flag issues with the education provider. The visitors requested evidence of the audit and confirmation that qualified staff are part of the audit.

The visitors also considered that in addition to the audit, it would be helpful to see the pre-agreement form that the education provider mentioned in their



documentation, but was not in itself included as part of the evidence. The visitors considered that evidence of the training that is given (or confirmation of the awards that are accepted for example) would also be helpful.

**Outcomes of exploration:** Through the NHS contract submitted as part of the further evidence, the visitors were assured that there is standard placement agreement that would support adequate staffing in practice-based learning. In addition, the shared domain of Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) for Yorkshire and the Humber provided further assurance of how the education provider will ensure adequate numbers of appropriately qualified staff in practice-based learning. The visitors also saw further evidence as it relates to this aspect, in the Educational Audit.

The visitors also saw in the presentation the processes that the education provider has in place to ensure the suitability of practice educators to support and develop learners in a safe and effective way.

#### Quality theme 6 – Appropriateness of the learning and teaching methods

**Area for further exploration:** Ensuring the learning and teaching methods used are appropriate to effectively deliver the learning outcomes.

The visitors saw that the education provider uses a range of learning and teaching methods to deliver the programme. However, there appeared to be a missing link between traditional study and distance learning. It was unclear how the degree apprenticeship learners are supported in undertaking digital activities.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested additional evidence that demonstrates how this group of learners will be supported in terms of developing distance learning skills, for example, in undertaking digital group work.

The visitors noted that some of the modules in the course descriptor for example DA Personal and Professional Development include face-to-face or synchronous learning but it was unclear if the apprentices have the option for both.

The visitors were unable to determine what mechanisms are in place to support the transition to a distance learning platform.

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their response, the education provider noted that apprentices will have access to a fully online delivery with a blend of synchronous and asynchronous teaching. The visitors considered that the sample blackboard site and the screencast provided were useful in enabling these aspects of the programme to be assured.

#### Quality theme 7 – Structure and range of practice-based learning

**Area for further exploration:** How clinical practice is undertaken to ensure it allows for the achievement of the learning outcomes.

From the course outline submitted, it was clear as to the structure of the academic areas. All other times it was referred to as 'on-the-job'. The visitors wanted to be clear if the learners have protected time to undertake placement learning. The visitors noted that the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) indicates that 'off-the-job' training relates to the apprentice learning any new skills. This would include the apprentice engaging in a clinical placement.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** The visitors requested clear articulation of when the apprentices' clinical placements will take place. They considered that evidence showing the duration and range of the placements would also be useful to ensure it supports the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors saw the sample delivery schedule, which showed the delivery schedule for the year. The visitors saw that this will be shared with the employers as part of the onboarding process so employers and apprentices are aware of the requirements for off the job learning weeks which will take place as identified. The visitors considered that the additional evidence provided clearly articulates how the structure of placement learning supports the learning outcomes and the SOPs.

## Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

### Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

#### Findings of the assessment panel:

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.

The visitors were satisfied that the programme aligns with the level of qualification expected for entry onto the register as a therapeutic radiographer.

- **SET 2: Programme admissions** – As part of the admissions process, the visitors noted that the selection and entry include a face-to-face interview which takes place between the applicant, the education provider and the

employer. The visitors noted in particular, the education provider's involvement in the selection and interview process given their overall responsibility for the programme. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's process of getting the apprentices on-boarded onto the programme would allow them to be able to meet our standards for registration once they have successfully completed the programme.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** – The visitors saw that the education provider has a comprehensive approach to how they ensure effective collaboration between them and practice education providers. For example, the visitors noted that the College Director of Placements, representing all AHPs as well as other health professions at Sheffield Hallam University, holds regular meetings with placement coordinators from all Trusts. Within each professional area, there is a designated clinical lead who works directly with the director of placements.

Work based learning coaches (WBLC) are recruited, trained and allocated workloads to support the mentors in the workplace and the apprentice. The coach holds quarterly progress review meetings, sometimes referred to as tripartite meetings with the apprentices and their mentor.

The education provider has standard policies and procedures in place where apprentices raise concerns.

The 3-way review process between the workplace mentor, WBLC and the apprentice provides an opportunity for the apprentice to raise concerns.

From the initial submission and the additional staff CVs provided, the visitors saw that all academics who deliver on the programme are either HCPC registered therapeutic radiographers or registered with their own professional/regulatory body as required. The CVs indicated that the staff have the specialist knowledge and expertise to deliver the subject area. The visitors also noted that the integrated nature of the curriculum means that apprentices will not only be taught by lecturers from their own profession but also from across a range of other healthcare professions.

The visitors saw a wide variety of approaches and systems that are used to deliver the programme. The visitors also noted that apprentices have access to the library gateway for additional skills support and a range of other specialist technologies is being utilised within the programme delivery. Placement Handbook provides a comprehensive overview of placements both for the learners and practice partners by signposting the learners to the support that is available to them when in practice-based learning.

The visitors also noted that the education provider's website provides comprehensive information specific to the degree apprenticeship therapeutic radiography programme.

On this basis, the visitors were satisfied that that there are appropriate processes and procedures in place to ensure the programme is effectively led,

managed and governed. The visitors were also satisfied that the systems and processes in place to review, monitor and improve the programme are effective.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** – In their review, the visitors saw that the programme had been suitably mapped to the HCPC's standards of proficiency (SOPs) and the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) Standards of Education and Training both at programme and module level. There was also evidence to show the standards of conduct performance and ethics are embedded throughout the programme. The visitors considered that the curriculum is based on research informed teaching philosophy. Evidence of how theory and practice are integrated was clearly seen in the structure of the programme and the learning activities. The visitors also considered that the degree apprenticeship model of learning appropriately and proportionately combines work-based learning, university teaching, self-directed learning and practice placements.

The visitors also noted that the degree apprenticeship programme is designed in a way that promotes a critical and proactive approach to learning. Therefore, the visitors considered that learners who successfully complete the programme would be equipped with the necessary skills to practice as autonomous professionals.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** – The visitors understood from their initial documentary review and the additional information submitted that the education provider is part of Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) – a system that holds data for placements in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The PARE system holds information about qualification of users and allows them to make changes when they have updated their qualifications. The visitors sighted the NHS Education Contract schedule, which is an agreement between the education provider and their practice education providers. The document highlights the responsibilities of the practice provider as well as the process they use to flag issues with the education provider. In their response to quality activity, the visitor saw that the Radiotherapy and Oncology team have a long history of close working partnership with employers where they support them to support apprentices through staff training. The visitors saw that through regular 3-way reviews, tracking of apprentices' ability to meet the KSBs is monitored and adjusted. The 2021/22 delivery schedule provided clearly demonstrated how the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning would support the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- **SET 6: Assessment** – The mapping of modules to HCPC SOPs demonstrated how assessments would ensure learning outcomes are met. The visitors saw a range of assessment strategies and how these will be used to develop academic writing, clinical reasoning, presentation, digital literacy skills and practical therapeutic radiography skills. The visitors were therefore satisfied that assessments are designed in a way that would ensure learners who successfully complete the programme acquire the skills and knowledge to practise safely and effectively as regulated health professionals.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:** None

## Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas, which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval, focused review, or performance review process).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

## Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

### **Assessment panel recommendation**

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that all standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved.

We will record the decision of the Education and Training Committee here following their meeting on 31 March 2022

### **Education and Training Committee decision**

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that the programme(s) are approved.

**Reason for this decision:** The Panel accepted the visitors' recommendation that the programme(s) should be approved.