
Approval process report

Staffordshire University, Paramedic, 2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve a paramedic programme at Staffordshire University. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme are fit to practice.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Reviewed the programme against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme should be approved.
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme is approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the programme is approved.
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year.

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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) approval / 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:

Jason Comber	Lead visitor, Paramedic
Matthew Catterall	Lead visitor, Paramedic
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer
Saranjit Binning	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 15 HCPC-approved programmes across five professions and includes two post registration programmes for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotations. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2002.

The proposed programme will be based in the School of Health, Science and Wellbeing, which is where the other approved programmes are based. The education provider already delivers an apprenticeship programme in operating department practice and therefore have experience of delivering apprenticeships. The education provider engaged with the performance review in 2021 in the current model of quality assurance. In 2022 the education provider engaged with the records change process to close four approved biomedical scientist programmes, and to move these to a single award title BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Life Sciences) for a 2022 intake. They also closed their DipHE Operating Department Practice programme through the record change process in 2022.

The education provider engaged with the major change process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2018 to add a degree apprenticeship route through their approved operating department practice programme. They engaged with the major change process in 2021 to notify us of changes to programme admissions and assessment for the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science programme. In 2021 through the major change process, they informed us that they have made changes with their prescribing programmes in line with revised prescribing standards and the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) revised standards for prescribing programmes (2019).

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
Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2012
	Occupational therapy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2003
	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2003
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2008
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2002
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing		2007	

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	Bench- mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	1307	1407	2022	<p>The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>We reviewed the education provider's documentation and assessed if there were sufficient resources to deliver the programme. The visitors were satisfied with the information provided.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	4%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests</p>

				<p>the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 3%.</p>
<p>Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study</p>	94%	96%	2019-20	<p>This data was sourced a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 5%.</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the provider is performing above sector norms.</p>
<p>Learner satisfaction</p>	78.8%	85.6%	2023	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 12%.</p>

				We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the provider is performing above sector norms.
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	2026-27	2022-23	The education provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year.

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 –**
 - The principles and methods of the Admissions Policy guides decisions related to admissions made by the education provider. It is applicable to all provision.
 - The proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship programme. Applicants will be employed, and learning will take place both in employment and on campus. To ensure the admissions policy is applied appropriately to the proposed apprenticeship programme, the education provider will work closely with employer partners through the recruitment process.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - All teaching, learning and assessment is in English. All applicants are therefore required to demonstrate they meet the required level of English language competency for the programme. This is set by the Admissions Policy.
 - Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to have a recognised English language qualification, such as International

English Testing System (IELTS), or equivalent at the appropriate level for their programme.

- Applicants complete a self-declaration form to declare criminal convictions before starting the programme. This is used in conjunction with the Disclosure and Barring Service process. Any issues are addressed through a Student Suitability panel.
- Learners undertake an occupational health assessment before the start of the programme and regularly throughout.
- Employers are involved with the selection process and undertake interviews to ensure candidates meet the education providers entry criteria.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The Recognition of Prior Learning policy (RPL) tells staff and applicants how to apply for recognition of prior learning. Applications to consider prior learning should be made before the programme starts. Applications for RPL are assessed by the Programme Leader. This applies to all provision.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) –**
 - The education provider promotes a culture where staff, learners and visitors are confident to be themselves. Inclusion ensures equality of opportunity. This commitment to inclusion is reflected in the education provider's core values which underpin all provision.
 - The values and work of the education provider are supported by an EDI framework. All levels of academic staff and management are responsible for the implementation of the framework. Programme Leads, Programme Directors and Heads of Department review issues regularly throughout the academic year and at key points in programme and curriculum development and review. The education provider publishes an annual report on EDI.
 - The Staffordshire University Inclusion Group ensures:
 - an environment that promotes social and educational inclusion and equality of opportunity for everyone who works at, studies at, or visits the education provider; and
 - the needs, rights, and contributions of people with protected characteristics are at the centre of the design and delivery of strategies and operational plans.
 - Equality impact assessments are carried out as part of new projects or initiatives, including curriculum development.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

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 Register¹ –**
 - Curriculum development is undertaken through the Course Approval and Development policy. This is to ensure Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accredited programmes comply with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarks and HCPC standards of education and training. Programmes are mapped against the relevant standards of proficiency.
 - Ongoing compliance is monitored by the Quality Enhancement Service through the Programme Review process and continuous monitoring. This is also monitored at department level by the Head of Department and Programme Directors.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The Academic Strategy ensures sustainability of programmes is essential. New programmes are assessed for their business viability before being developed. Programmes are designed to be efficiently and sustainably designed and delivered.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - Following initial approval, programmes are continually monitored. They are reviewed every six years by their department through the Course Monitoring and Review process. Programmes which are seen as underperforming or not being effective are reviewed. This happens at either at a department, school or education provider level depending on the significance of the issues highlighted.

¹ 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 school maintains a register of professional registration and ensures academics responsible for programme areas hold appropriate qualifications and registration.
- Currently other professional programmes are already offering apprenticeship programmes, such as nursing. The education provider therefore has appropriate support and resources in place to support the proposed apprenticeship programme.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - The education provider ensures all staff are appropriately qualified and developed for their role. The Managing Academic Workloads and the Professional Contract Policy, Performance and Development Review process, and Training for Approved Qualifications policy ensure all staff have opportunities to discuss their development with their line manager and demonstrate they remain up to date in their qualifications, professional registration (if appropriate) and skillset.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - Partnerships with NHS Trusts are governed by the NHS Education Contract and managed through ongoing relationships between senior management teams and at programme level.
 - There is a commitment to engage with partners such as the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). This ensures the quality and effectiveness of the apprenticeship programme prepares learners appropriately.
 - The NHS Education Contract 2021-24, General Data Protection Regulation Data Sharing Protocol – NHS Trust, Quality, Education and Workforce Development process, and the Practice Learning Quality Assurance and Governance process ensure ongoing communication, collaboration, and quality assurance.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - The Academic Quality Service (AQS) provides a range of quality assurance and enhancement services. The School of Health, Science and Wellbeing has a Quality Officer who is the first point of contact for quality-related queries.
 - The School Academic Committee (SAC) deals with quality-related items, including proposals for amendments and professional body issues. The SAC is chaired by the Dean and reports to the University Quality Committee.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - The Placement and Practice policy outlines the expectations for the delivery of practice learning. This is applied to all programmes which have practice learning.
 - The Quality Education & Workforce Development process, Practice Learning Quality Assurance & Governance process, Educational Audit policy, Continuous Monitoring policy, and Student Voice ensure quality assurance and effective partnership working with other organisations.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement –**
 - The Student Charter sets out the education provider's commitments to learners, and the responsibilities of learners for their own learning. This applies to all provision.
 - The Student Voice ensures learners can feed back. Learners are involved in curriculum development, quality monitoring and enhancement of learning and teaching. This is carried out through Course Committee meetings, Module Evaluation process and the Student Practice Learning Evaluation process.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
 - The Service User and Carer strategy sets out how service users and carers are involved in the development and delivery of programmes in the School of Health, Science & Wellbeing. Service users and carers are involved in areas such as learner and staff recruitment, learning and teaching, assessment, curriculum development and quality assurance, committees, and quality enhancement.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - The education provider’s website details the various services and practices which are available to learners to support them with their studies and in a pastoral capacity. Some of these services include the Practice Learning Hub Team and the Careers and Employability Advisory Team.
 - Learners are assigned an academic mentor to support them with studies and to provide access to further pastoral support.
 - The Placement and Practice policy sets out support mechanisms in place for learners in practice, with details provided in programme documents.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - Learners are required to declare their good character and health on an annual basis and advise the education provider if anything occurs that may bring this into question.
 - Concerns about personal behaviour, suitability or academic conduct are managed using the relevant policy. For example, the Fitness to Practice and Fitness to Study Policy, Academic Conduct Policy, Contract of Professional Behaviour, Occupational Health Policy, and Cause for Concerns Process.
 - Learners study in accordance with the HCPC’s standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - The School Interprofessional Education Strategy sets out how interprofessional learning takes place across the School of Health, Science & Wellbeing. This includes learning in theory and practice.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The education provider promotes a positive and inclusive culture where staff, learners and visitors are confident. Inclusion ensures equality of opportunity. This commitment to inclusion is reflected in the education provider's core values which underpin all provision.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - The Assessment Policy and Procedures defines a series of principles and policies behind learner's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. For example, assessments must be of a high standard. These are applicable to all provision.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - The Academic Regulations are the academic rules which apply to undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. Undergraduate learners need to achieve at least 90 credits to progress to the next stage. Learners will need to pass any outstanding credit before they can progress to a further stage.
 - These apply to all programmes, and exceptions are only permitted where professional body requirements make this necessary.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals –**
 - The Complaints and Appeals Procedure applies to all learners and explains what constitutes an appeal and what constitutes a complaint. It also provides information on how appeals are considered. A link to this is included in the Student Handbook. This applies to all programmes.
 - Learners need to submit their appeal in writing. They must say why they want to appeal and include supporting evidence.

- Learners who are also employees of their practice provider will need to be aware of both their employer and the education provider's complaints procedures. How the two work together is explained in the Student Handbook.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

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.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- There are several personnel who are involved in the management and delivery of the apprenticeship. These roles align with UK government apprenticeship requirements, best practice, and are typical of staffing structures in UK education providers and UK Ambulance Service Education apprenticeship programme delivery. Roles in the education provider include the Dean of School, University Apprenticeship Team, Heads of Department, Course Director, Course Lead, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, Academic Lecturers/ Simulation Technicians, Apprenticeship Assessor, Senior Lecturer Practice Education, Apprenticeship Administrator, Practice Learning Hub Team, Quality Assurance Senior Lecturer, and Careers and Employability Advisory Team.
- The education provider is committed to engaging with a range of personnel from West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). The education provider considers this is critical for ensuring the apprenticeship provides education that prepares learners for successful careers in the field. Collaboration between the education provider and WMAS at multiple levels ensures the programme's relevance, quality, and effectiveness. Roles within WMAS include the Director of Education and Training, Clinical Training Managers / Officers, Practice Educators, Paramedic Mentors, Senior Operational Managers, HR and Recruitment Personnel, Clinical Governance or Quality Assurance Teams, Clinical Specialists, and Operational Crews.
- The education provider has aligned their resources and environments to the requirements set out by regulatory and professional bodies such as the HCPC and the College of Paramedics. The education provider assesses their resources to ensure they remain aligned to guidance on the standards of education and training that must be met to ensure learners are fit to practice upon successful completion. Resources include lecture rooms and theatres.

These are equipped with modern audio-visual teaching aids for lectures and seminars.

- All resources are currently in place to support the programme. The education provider already has apprenticeship support in place as they are currently engaged in other professional programmes (e.g., nursing). The apprentice team is briefed and staffed appropriately. WMAS provide apprenticeships for their Associate Ambulance Practitioner Role and have also the ability to absorb the proposed apprenticeship into their current placement offer. As a workplace partner, they have the appropriate roles to support their apprentices. The last cohort of learners on the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science programme started in September 2023. The resources dedicated to this programme will transfer to the apprenticeship.
- It is anticipated further resources may be needed in the form of Work-Based Education Officers at the point of the programme coming online in September 2024. This will be considered over the coming months with arrangements put in place prior to the start of the academic year.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: 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) Paramedic Science (Apprenticeship)	Full time	Paramedic	100 learners per cohort, one cohort per year	23 September 2024

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.

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.

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the [Findings section](#).

Quality theme 1 – Ensure range of practice-based learning opportunities for learners

Area for further exploration: Visitors noted the structure of the programme demonstrated a balanced blend of theory to practice-based learning. They noted for the ambulance service placements, the learning opportunities appeared to be appropriately planned, however there was some flexibility with the learning opportunities for the non-ambulance placements. The visitors thought this approach could possibly limit the range of learning opportunities learners would have access to and would impact the learner experience. Visitors therefore requested further information to understand how the education provider would ensure learners had access to suitable learning opportunities consistently through the delivery of the programme to meet the standards of proficiency.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We agreed to explore this area further by requesting email clarification from the education provider. We considered the email clarification would be the most effective method to understand how the education provider ensured all learners would have access to a range of learning opportunities.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider explained how they would ensure learners had access to a range of suitable learning opportunities, which included simulated practice. In the explanation provided, it was clear learners would be part of the workforce and would work directly with their practice educator, however they would also be allocated shifts in other areas. This would be arranged by the Education Training Officers and would be bespoke to the individual learner's development needs. The Education Training Officers are employed by the Trust and work with practice educators to support learners and are involved with the tripartite progress reviews. They work in conjunction with the education provider and monitor learner progress and ensure learners have access to appropriate learning opportunities. The Tripartite Progress Review Meetings enable the academic team and practice educators to assess the suitability of the learning opportunities. In addition to this, learners are also encouraged to provide regular feedback on their experience. This feedback would be monitored to ensure learners had access to appropriate learning opportunities. This approach ensured both the education provider and practice educator had oversight of the learner's development needs and that learners were supported with access to suitable learning opportunities.

The visitors acknowledged the additional information supplied by the education provider and confirmed they were satisfied the education provider had an appropriate process to ensure there was a range of learning opportunities available and how this was monitored.

Quality theme 2 – Ensuring practice educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners

Area for further exploration: Visitors recognised practice educators completed a one-day course to prepare them to support learners. They acknowledged the purpose of this course was to support practice educators and familiarise them with the practice assessment documentation. However, it was not clear to them if this was a mandatory course. Visitors considered this course was important for all practice educators to undertake due to the material it covered, and it was therefore important for them to understand what the expected commitment was from them for this programme. In addition to this, it was not clear to the visitors if there was a process to ensure ongoing development for practice educators to ensure they continued to have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners. Visitors therefore requested further information to understand the process for ensuring practice educators had the relevant knowledge, skills and experience and what ongoing training they received.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We agreed to explore this area further by requesting email clarification from the education provider. We considered the email clarification would be the most effective method to understand how the education provider ensured all practice educators had relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners, which would also include any training available.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider confirmed there was an expectation that all practice educators should attend the one-day course, which is a process that has been in place for many years. The purpose of the course was to help practice educators understand the Practice Assessment Documentation (PAD). Visitors acknowledged this and noted the education provider offered additional support alongside this, which was also used as a contingency if practice educators were unable to attend the one-day course. This was in the form of development sessions and online courses. These courses and sessions ensured practice educators understood the Practice Assessment Documentation and were equipped to support the learners.

There were clear processes and agreements in place with the stakeholders to ensure practice educators had relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners. For example, processes were in place to ensure practice educators had appropriate knowledge included the requirement for them to have achieved the level 3 certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement and level 4 certificate in Education and Training and Internal Quality Assurance. Other processes used to manage this were the tripartite meetings and the Annual Quality Standards Monitoring Forum where learner provision was discussed. This demonstrated how both the education

provider and stakeholders worked together to ensure practice educators had the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners. Visitors also acknowledged the monitoring of all practice educators to ensure they were registered with the HCPC.

The visitors acknowledged the additional information supplied by the education provider and confirmed they were satisfied the education provider had an appropriate process to ensure practice educators were appropriately prepared and trained to support learners.

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.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

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.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
 - It was noted there was an admissions policy which was accessible to all candidates on the education providers website, however it did not include specific details of the entry criteria. This detail was also not included in the programme specification. Through clarification, the education provider confirmed the admissions policy applies to all programmes, which was why specific programme related entry criteria had not been included. However, they confirmed the programme

specification had been amended to include the course specific entry criteria.

- Visitors were satisfied the selection and entry criteria was set at an appropriate level for an apprenticeship programme. These included details of GCSE qualifications and equivalence and other entry requirements
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership –**
 - It was noted there was a process for the education provider to collaborate with practice education providers. Through clarification, we noted they regularly met with stakeholders at different levels. For example, there were regular meetings with the West Midlands Ambulance Service and other NHS Trusts where practice-based learning was discussed. Contract review meetings were also held quarterly, which involved senior managers as well as the Apprenticeship Manager for the West Midlands Ambulance Service.
 - Visitors acknowledged the comprehensive information provided in relation to the availability and capacity of practice-based learning within the West Midlands Ambulance Service. There was a process in place to manage availability and capacity of practice-based learning, which was through the formal commissioning review meeting that takes place annually.
 - Through clarification, we noted the non-ambulance based practice-based learning experiences were to enhance the learner experience. We explored this further through [Quality theme 1](#). This was in addition to the experiences provided to learners through the simulated practice and were agreed through the University's Practice Learning Partner, Quality Assurance and Governance Process.
 - Through the staff list and CVs, the education provider demonstrated there was a strong team to deliver the programme. The team was made up of experienced practitioners who have a range of qualifications and offer specialist knowledge and expertise, especially in paramedic science.
 - Through clarification, we recognised staff had appropriate practical and clinical experience. To ensure staff had relevant educational experience, all staff were required to have completed the Academic Professional Apprenticeship or Postgraduate Certificate in Higher and Professional Education at level 7 or be working towards it.
 - There were a range of resources offered to learners, which included, the Blackboard virtual learning environment, simulation suites and updated facilities to teach in. The information provided included details on how learning would be supported on campus, during simulation and in practice-based learning.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
 - The learning outcomes were clearly mapped against the Standards of Proficiency mapping document.
 - Professional behaviours and the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics were embedded throughout the programme to ensure learners understand the expectations. This has been considered in the programme development, course documentation and module descriptors.
 - The philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base were clearly articulated in the structure and delivery of the programme. We noted that the documentation identified how the content related to apprenticeship guidance and standards.
 - Through clarification, we noted there were several processes to review and update the curriculum to ensure it remained up to date. This included the course team reviewing the course content annually and oversight from the education providers Academic Quality Service.
 - The structure of the programme ensured the integration of theory and practice. Visitors noted how clearly this was covered across the programme and how it was embedded into the delivery model and modules.
 - There was evidence of a variety of learning and teaching methods being used, which were evidenced in the programme specification. These were embedded throughout the programme with a particular emphasis on simulation-based learning.
 - Visitors noted how the learning outcomes enabled learners to develop their autonomous and reflective thinking skills at all three levels.
 - The structure of the curriculum ensures evidence-based practice is embedded throughout the programme across all three years.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - There was evidence of practice-based learning being integrated through the programme documentation. For example, the programme documentation allowed learners to record all simulation experiences, non-ambulance learning and practice-based learning they had engaged with. The online practice assessment documentation demonstrated how practice-based learning was integrated with the academic content across the programme.
 - Through clarification, we noted attendance for learners was 100%. If learners were unable to attend placement due to sickness the education provider would make alternative arrangements.
 - Through [Quality theme 1](#), the education provider demonstrated there was a process to ensure there were a range of appropriate learning opportunities available to the learners.

- Through clarification, we noted the placement leads closely monitored data relating to the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning. This enabled them to manage and respond to any reductions in the number of practice educators.
 - Through [Quality theme 2](#), visitors acknowledged there were a range of agreements and processes to ensure practice educators had relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support staff.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
 - All learning outcomes are mapped against the HCPC standards, which enables learners to demonstrate they meet the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
 - Assessment methods are clear and appropriate and outlined in the module descriptors and programme specification. There is evidence of a variety of different assessment methods being used for academic modules and practice-based learning.
 - The programme was clearly mapped against the HCPC standards of proficiency and the assessment strategy ensured learners met these. It was noted the assessment strategy varied according to the module and year focus appropriately.
 - Through clarification, we noted the minimum pass mark was 40%. However, all learners were required to pass all assessments, which ensured they have met all the standards of proficiency. The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

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.

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. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

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.

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 is approved.
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year.

Reason for this decision: The Education and Training Committee Panel agreed with the findings of the visitors and were satisfied with the recommendation to approve the programme.

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on approval. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation, and the nature, quality and facilities of the provision.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
Staffordshire University	CAS-01450-B1G3V4	Jason Comber Matthew Catterall	<p>Through this assessment, we have noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved. 	<p>Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are several personnel who are involved in the management and delivery of the apprenticeship. These roles align with UK government apprenticeship requirements, best practice, and are typical of staffing structures in UK education providers and UK Ambulance Service Education apprenticeship programme delivery. Roles in the education provider include the Dean of School, University Apprenticeship Team, Heads of Department, Course Director, Course Lead, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, Academic Lecturers/ Simulation Technicians, Apprenticeship Assessor, Senior Lecturer Practice Education, Apprenticeship Administrator, Practice Learning Hub Team, Quality Assurance Senior Lecturer, and Careers and Employability Advisory Team. The education provider is committed to engaging with a range of personnel from West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). The education provider considers this is critical for

				<p>ensuring the apprenticeship provides education that prepares learners for successful careers in the field. Collaboration between the education provider and WMAS at multiple levels ensures the programme's relevance, quality, and effectiveness. Roles within WMAS include the Director of Education and Training, Clinical Training Managers / Officers, Practice Educators, Paramedic Mentors, Senior Operational Managers, HR and Recruitment Personnel, Clinical Governance or Quality Assurance Teams, Clinical Specialists, and Operational Crews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The education provider has aligned their resources and environments to the requirements set out by regulatory and professional bodies such as the HCPC and the College of Paramedics. The education provider assesses their resources to ensure they remain aligned to guidance on the standards of education and training that must be met to ensure learners are fit to practice upon successful completion. Resources include lecture rooms and theatres. These are equipped with modern audio-visual teaching aids for lectures and seminars.• All resources are currently in place to support the programme. The education provider already has apprenticeship support in place as they are currently engaged in other professional programmes (e.g., nursing). The apprentice team is briefed and staffed appropriately.
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				<p>WMAS provide apprenticeships for their Associate Ambulance Practitioner Role and have also the ability to absorb the proposed apprenticeship into their current placement offer. As a workplace partner, they have the appropriate roles to support their apprentices. The last cohort of learners on the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science programme started in September 2023. The resources dedicated to this programme will transfer to the apprenticeship.</p> <p>It is anticipated further resources may be needed in the form of Work-Based Education Officers at the point of the programme coming online in September 2024. This will be considered over the coming months with arrangements put in place prior to the start of the academic year.</p>
Programmes				
Programme name			Mode of study	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (Apprenticeship)			Full time	Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2012
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Blood Sciences)	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Cellular Sciences)	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Sciences)	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Infection Sciences)	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2017
BSc Hons Healthcare Science (Life Sciences)	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2019
Foundation Degree in Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/10/2009
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2018
Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/09/2015
Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Health psychologist		01/09/2002
Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology	PT (Part time)	Practitioner psychologist	Health psychologist		01/08/2002

Independent/Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Level 6)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014
Independent/Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals (Level 7)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014