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## Approval process report

University of Portsmouth, diagnostic radiography, 2024-25

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### Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve the Diagnostic Radiography programme at the University of Portsmouth. 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 following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme is approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
  - The education provider has not fully finalised who the employer, or employers, will be to deliver this degree apprenticeship programme. As these relationships have not been fully finalised, the visitors recommended that a focused review is undertaken, within three months of the first intake, to:
    - determine which employer(s) are involved in the delivery of the programme.
    - understand if any of the policies / processes have changed, including changes to the responsibilities, based upon confirmation of the education provider and employer relationship.
    - if so, consider how the changes may impact how the programme continues to meet the standards of education and training.
- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

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<b>Previous consideration</b>	Not applicable. This is a new programme the education provider is seeking approval
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<b>Decision</b>	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The programme is approved.</li><li>• Whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how.</li></ul>
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## Next steps

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Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:

- The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year.
  - Subject to the Panel's decision, we will undertake further investigations as per section 5.
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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 detailed in this report meets our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme 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
Rachel Picton	Lead visitor, Radiographer, Diagnostic Radiographer
Saranjit Binning	Education Quality Officer

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

### **The education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers eight HCPC-approved programmes across five professions. In August 2024 they received approval to deliver their first, degree apprenticeship programme. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1995. This includes one post registration programme for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotations.

The education provider is made up of five faculties and there are several schools that sit within each faculty. The Faculty of Science and Health consists of four schools and the HCPC approved programmes are based in the School of Dental, Health and Care Professions. The proposed programme will be based in the School of Dental, Health and Care Professions.

The education provider engaged with the performance review process in 2021. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the Education and Training Committee agreed the programmes remain approved in March 2023. We recommended that the next engagement with the performance review process should be in five years in the 2026-27 academic year.

The education provider engaged with the approval review process in 2023 for the Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals, part time programme. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards were met, and that the programme was approved by the Education and Training Committee in August 2024.

The education provider engaged with the approval review process in 2024 for the BSc (Hons) Degree Apprenticeship in Operating Department Practice, full time programme. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards were met, and the programme was approved by the Education and Training Committee in July 2024.

### 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 2](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2002
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2005
	Physiotherapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2022
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2016
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1995

<b>Post-registration</b>	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing	2024
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### 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	206	276	25/09/2024	<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 the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year’s data point, the education provider’s performance has dropped by 1%.</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there was no impact on SETs considered.</p>
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	92%	92%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects</p> <p>The data point is equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider’s performance in this area is in line with sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year’s data point, the education provider’s performance has been maintained.</p>
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Gold	2023	<p>The definition of a Gold TEF award is “Provision is consistently outstanding and of the highest quality found in</p>

				<p>the UK Higher Education sector.”</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment because was no impact on SETs considered.</p>
National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score	79.3%	80.3%	2024	<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 3%.</p>
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	5 years	2021-22	<p>The education provider engaged with the performance review process in 2021-22 and were given a five year monitoring period (2026-27).</p>

### 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 –**
  - Information related to admissions is available on the education providers website. The Admissions policy and procedure outlines the institution wide policies covering information for applicants.
  - The proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship. Employers will therefore be involved with the recruitment and selection process and will apply the policies and procedures outlined in the Apprenticeship Policy Framework 2021.
  - There are programme specific policies which apply to individual disciplines, which can be found on the programme specific webpages. The information includes programme applicant guides, programme information and programme specifications.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
  - Relevant entry requirements are available on the education provider's website. The admissions policy outlines the English language, character and health requirements.
  - For all HCPC approved programmes, applicants are required to complete criminal conviction checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and occupational health checks. Applicants will also be required to undertake values-based interviews. For the proposed programme this will be managed by the employer.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
  - The education provider uses the Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning Policy to assess applicants' prior learning and experience.
  - This policy applies to the HCPC approved programmes and all applications are considered on an individual basis. Applicants for the proposed programme will be required to complete an assessment to demonstrate existing knowledge prior to them enrolling on the programme. This will determine if they are eligible for 'Recognition of Prior Learning'.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider demonstrates they are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and has an Equality and Diversity policy that applies to all individuals.
  - In addition to this, the University of Portsmouth Access and Participation Plan supports applicants with accessing the appropriate services, which ensures any additional learning requirements are supported.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed 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 Academic Regulations provide details of the academic awards and any variations. The Academic Registry are responsible for overseeing this policy and ensure the delivery of the provision is to the expected threshold level of entry to the HCPC Register for all programmes.
  - External examiners are appointed and are involved with all assessment processes and regular reviews of the programmes
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
  - The Risk Management Policy 2024-25 ensures the sustainability of programmes and applies to all programmes at all levels. The policy acts as a mechanism to mitigate risk and therefore identifies, analyses and manages risk. The sustainability of the proposed programme has been considered through this policy.
  - In addition to the Risk Management Policy, there is also a University Strategy 2020-2025 and Vision 2030, which supports the development of partnerships locally and nationally. The sustainability of the proposed programme has been considered through this strategy.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
  - The education provider ensures they recruit appropriately qualified staff who are HCPC registered professionals.
  - All programmes are required to follow the Curriculum Framework Specification to ensure the quality and currency of the programmes.
  - In addition to this, the Apprenticeship Team will ensure the requirements outlined in the Apprenticeship Policy Framework 2021 are being met. This will include reviewing the quality of the programme and ensuring the objectives of the framework are being met. The policy also refers to the Annual Monitoring and Academic Review Policy, which provides details on the mechanisms in place to monitor and improve programmes.
  - A range of policies across academia and the practice-based learning environment ensure that learners are supported when raising concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. Some of these include

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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 Student Wellbeing and Mental Health policy and Code of Practice for Work Based and Placement Learning.

- These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
  - The Initial and Continuing Professional Development Policy requires all staff to engage with the personal development review process and identify their development needs to ensure knowledge and skills remain current. Through this process they are provided with further opportunities to develop their careers both internally and externally.
  - Staff involved with the delivery of the proposed programme will also be required to undertake training linked to the apprenticeship and Ofsted requirements.
  - The Curriculum Framework Specification is used to ensure the curriculum for all programmes remains current. This involves experienced and qualified staff reviewing the curriculum and making necessary changes or amendments accordingly.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
  - The Academic Partnerships Policy applies to all programmes, however there are some variations with the partnerships across the programmes based on the requirements of the individual programmes.
  - Learners on the proposed programme will be supported through the tripartite agreements. These agreements will be between the employer, apprentice and the education provider and will outline the responsibilities of each stakeholder.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.

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

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Academic quality –**
  - The policies to monitor the quality of the programmes are outlined in the Annual Monitoring and Academic Review Policy and the Policy for Approval, Modification and Closure of Academic Provision. These policies ensure the continuous improvement of programmes.
  - For the proposed programme, the quality of the degree apprenticeship programme will be monitored through the Apprenticeship Quality Management Board and the Quality Improvement Plan. The Quality Improvement Plan and Self-Assessment Report will be completed annually for the proposed programme. This will enable the education provider to assess the quality and effectiveness of the programme and

evaluate the role of the employer. In addition to this, the tripartite meetings will also play a role in monitoring the role and involvement of the employer with the programme. Any issues relating to quality will therefore be identified at this point and addressed and any ongoing issues will be highlighted in the report and plan at the end and actioned accordingly.

- In addition to this, the Quarterly Progress Review Boards will identify any issues and address them.
- These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
  - The Code of Practice for Work-Based and Placement Learning outlines a range of principles that must be applied to all work-based or placement learning. The Code ensures standards and quality are consistently maintained with all experiences across all programmes. There are some variations on how it is applied, which is normally the duration of placements and the experience required. As part of this process, all placements are reviewed twice a year.
  - All practice learning environments are audited and reviewed annually and visits are also undertaken by the academic team. This ensures they are aware of any developments in practice and enables them to monitor the provision and identify any changes that may require the practice learning environment to be reaudited. The Professional Liaison Group meetings are also used as a mechanism to monitor the practice learning environment. At these meetings the education provider and employers are able to discuss and address any issues relating to practice quality.
  - The education provider is committed to ensuring sufficient support is in place for learners and that all learners have access to an academic tutor.
  - The Code of Practice and Work Based Placement Learning ensures learners and practice educators have the information they need in a timely manner.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learner involvement –**
  - Learners are involved and represented at the Student Voice Committees and Board of Studies. This provides learners with a platform where their views and experiences are heard and considered and informs future changes to the programmes. The Student Voice Policy supports this involvement strategically across all programmes and emphasises the importance of learner involvement.
  - There is a requirement for module evaluations to be completed by all learners for all programmes. The completion of these evaluation forms

enables the education provider to capture both positive and negative aspects of the learner experience and make necessary improvements.

- The SHCP Service User and Carer Strategy outlines the policy for gaining consent from service users and learners.
- These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
  - The School of Dental, Health and Care Professions Service User and Carer Strategy supports the involvement of service users and carers with the HCPC programmes. This is a local policy and is currently being redeveloped.
  - There is a nominated Lead for the Service User Participation and Advisory (SUPA) Group, who is responsible for coordinating service user and carer involvement across the School.  
This policy is a School level policy and has been adopted by all HCPC approved programmes and will apply to the proposed programme. Through the performance review process in 2021-22, we have noted the Service User and Carer Strategy is a School level policy. Currently, there is no indication if the education provider has any plans to develop this strategy at the institution level. If the education provider chooses to develop this at an institution level, this should be considered further and referred to their next performance review in 2026-27. As this has already been noted, we do not need to refer it again.

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

### Learners

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

- **Support –**
  - There are a range of policies to support learners, such as the Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy, academic skills support and learning support tutors. The Student Complaints Procedure is also available to learners.
  - All learners are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor to provide them with pastoral and academic support, which includes referral to specific support services. This tutor supports learners through the duration of the programme.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
  - The ongoing suitability of learners is considered through the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure. Learners are also expected to adhere to the Code of Student Behaviour and are required to complete annual declarations to confirm there have been no changes with their circumstances.

- The process to complain about a learner is outlined in the Apprenticeship Policy Framework 2021. Learners on the proposed programme will be employed and therefore any complaints or disciplinary issues will be managed through their employers. The education provider will be made aware of any issues relating to fitness to practice and where required these issues will be addressed through the education providers processes. If learners are unable to meet the expectations of the HCPC standards they will be referred to the fitness to study procedures.
- These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
  - Interprofessional learning policies are profession specific and there is an established working group within the school to support this area. This group is made up of academics from across the school who are involved with health care education. The purpose of this group is to create interprofessional learning opportunities for learners across the health care programmes.
  - They recognise the importance of learning across professions and have outlined the policy for this in the Apprenticeship Policy Framework 2021. Learners on the proposed programme will therefore be provided with opportunities to work within multidisciplinary teams.
  - The interprofessional learning policies are used for the current health care programmes and will apply to the proposed programme. Through the performance review process in 2021-22, we have noted the interprofessional learning policy is a School level policy. Currently, there is no indication if the education provider has any plans to develop this policy at the institution level. If the education provider chooses to develop this at an institution level, this should be considered further and referred to their next performance review in 2026-27. As this has already been noted, we do not need to refer it again.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider's Equality and Diversity Policy statement demonstrates their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. This policy is embedded across all the programmes.
  - There are a range of other policies to promote this area and support learners, such as the Access and Participation plan, Dignity and Respect policy, Religion and Belief policy and Gender identity and expression policy.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** We have noted the interprofessional learning policies are profession specific. At the moment, there is no indication if the education provider has any plans to develop interprofessional learning policies at the institution level. If the education provider chooses to develop

such policies at an institution level, this should be considered further and referred to their next performance review in 2026-27.

## Assessment

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

- **Objectivity –**
  - Programmes are aligned to the Curriculum Framework Specification, which is outlined in the Assessment for Learning policy. To ensure further consistency and transparency, the Examination and Assessment Regulations are applied across all programmes.
  - External Examiners are involved with all elements of assessments and provide independent input into the assessments to ensure quality and academic standards are maintained.
  - For the proposed programme learners will be required to complete their end point assessment. Guidance for this assessment is outlined in the Apprenticeship Policy Framework 2021 and End Point Assessment Procedure 2023.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Progression and achievement –**
  - The Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring policy identifies and monitors learners at risk and aims to support learners with this.
  - The Examination and Assessment regulations apply to all programmes with regards to progression and achievement, with the exception of some specific variations for some of the professional courses. This is to ensure Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements are met.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Appeals –**
  - The appeals procedure is available in the Examination and Assessment Regulations and applies to all programmes. It is also included in the School of Health and Care Professions handbook.
  - These policies are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.

**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:

- The staff team for the diagnostic radiography programme consists of one Programme Lead, two full time senior teaching fellows, three teaching fellows and one Degree Apprenticeship lead who is also a full-time senior teaching fellow.
- The education provider offers a range of facilities to support the programme. These include a large, dedicated space for simulation practice that includes two ward areas. This is supported by a team of experienced technicians and learners can access these facilities for self-directed practice. There is also a virtual learning environment that has recently been updated.

### 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) Diagnostic Radiography and Medical Imaging Degree Apprenticeship	WBL (Work based learning)	Diagnostic radiographer	35 learners, 1 cohort	15/09/2025

#### 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 – Collaboration with employers to ensure there is a commitment to supply the proposed programme with apprentices.

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider submitted evidence of the stakeholders they currently work with on the approved Radiography programmes. Visitors acknowledged the regular collaboration between these stakeholders and the education provider, which was further supported by the professional liaison group. However, they noted there was no evidence of the education provider collaborating with a specific employer and a commitment of how many learners they would be sending on the proposed programme. We recognised how the partnership arrangements for apprenticeship programmes may operate differently to the traditional programmes. It was therefore important for us to be clear there was a commitment from employers to support the proposed programme and supply apprentices to ensure it was sustainable. They therefore requested further details of the employer the education provider would be working with. This included evidence of any commitments or agreements in place of the approximate number of apprentices they would be sending on the proposed programme. In addition to this, any evidence of meetings that had taken place or, would be taking place where these discussions had been had, was also requested.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We agreed to explore this area further by requesting email and documentary evidence from the education provider. We considered this would be the most effective method to understand how the education provider was collaborating with employers and working with them to secure a commitment on the number of learners they would be supplying.

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their response, the education provider explained they had collaborated with a number of employers to develop the proposed programme. These included:

- University Hospital Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (East & West)
- Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust
- University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
- Sussex and Surrey Healthcare NHS Trust
- Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust
- Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Isle of Wight NHS Trust
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

The 'PLG Data Dec 24 – Form responses 1' document outlined the data that had been gathered from employers. This document provided details of the number of apprentices employers would be sending on the proposed programme in 2025 and a future forecast of apprentice numbers. The education provider also explained how

they intended to offer the proposed programme to a wider audience once it had been approved with the intention of increasing learner numbers.

Visitors acknowledged the additional information supplied by the education provider and confirmed they were satisfied the education provider had collaborated with employers to develop the programme and gain a commitment to send apprentices on the proposed programme. They were therefore satisfied this quality theme was finalised and therefore standard was met at threshold.

They also recognised the education provider had not yet fully finalised who the employer, or employers, will be to deliver this degree apprenticeship programme. The nature of degree apprenticeships means there is a much greater role played by the employer than in traditional models of delivery. As such, the visitors also recommend that a focused review is undertaken following approval of the programme. This would consider if the finalisation of the employers had resulted in any changes to how the programme demonstrates the standards of education and training.

#### Quality theme 2 – ensuring there is adequate capacity and range of practice-based learning opportunities to meet the standard of proficiency (SOPs).

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider explained how apprentices would be supported by their employers and the practice-based learning would therefore be provided by the employer. Visitors were satisfied with this and the learning outcomes being delivered through practice-based learning. They acknowledged the information provided, however they noted there may be some working environments where not all the SOPs could be achieved and therefore there would be a need for an alternative placement experience to be provided to the apprentice. Further information was therefore sought on how the education provider would ensure all programme requirements were met and the apprentices would be able to achieve all the SOPs. As part of this, visitors also requested further information on how the capacity of practice-based learning would be overseen and audited.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We agreed to explore this area further by requesting email and documentary evidence from the education provider. We considered this would be the most effective method to understand how the education provider would ensure apprentices had access to a range of opportunities and how capacity would be managed.

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their response, the education provider outlined how employers were required to have contracts in place with alternative placement providers before apprentices commenced the programme. This only applied to those employers where apprentices were unable to meet all the SOPs. It was noted how this approach ensured apprentices would have access to appropriate learning opportunities to meet the SOPs. In addition to this, the education provider discussed the challenges with securing additional practice-based learning opportunities for

apprentices with NHS England and they confirmed they would be willing to assist with any shortages if required.

Other approaches to ensure capacity for practice-based learning were discussed with the professional liaison group. From these discussions it transpired employers preferred academic block release instead of day release as this provided more flexibility with rostering. This approach also helped manage capacity for practice-based learning, as it enabled employers to use practice-based learning opportunities that were not being used by the direct entry learners for apprentices.

The education provider ensures apprentices have access to adequate and appropriate practice-based learning opportunities through various mechanisms. All apprentices are required to upload the number of hours they have completed on Aptem, which is an apprenticeship management system the education provider uses. This enables the education provider to review the hours, alongside the practice assessment document (PAD) during the tripartite meetings and update learning plans accordingly. It also assists with monitoring learning opportunities to ensure apprentices are meeting the SOPs and where this is not the case apprentices are provided with the relevant opportunities.

Visitors acknowledged the additional information supplied by the education provider and confirmed they were satisfied the education provider had appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure there were adequate practice-based learning opportunities to meet the (SOPs).

### Quality theme 3 – ensure appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators to support practice-based learning.

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider highlighted they had received additional funding for practice educators. Visitors acknowledged this and noted the funding had been made available to support and develop current and additional practice educators, which was a positive development. However, it was not clear to the visitors how practice educators were prepared to support apprentices and how the education provider ensured they had the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Further information was therefore requested to explain what mechanisms were in place to ensure practice educators supporting or supervising apprentices had undertaken the relevant training to be prepared appropriately and how this was monitored.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We agreed to explore this area further by requesting a narrative from the education provider. We considered this would be the most effective method to understand how the education provider would ensure there were appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators to support practice-based learning.

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their response, the education provider explained how the number of appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators available

to support practice-based learning were reviewed regularly through the professional liaison group meetings. In addition to this, the education provider also kept a register of practice educators, which included details of their qualifications, experience and training. This ensured apprentices were supported by practice educators who had appropriate qualifications, experience and training.

The education provider explained how the employers were responsible for providing practice educators with the relevant training to support apprentices. This was then monitored by the education provider via a register, which recorded practice educators qualifications, experience and ongoing training. In addition to this training, the education provider also offered study sessions for practice educators to help familiarise them with systems and expectations. Other resources available to practice educators included online modules, guidance documents and recorded sessions, which covered topics such as assessment strategies and supporting apprentice progression. This ensured practice educators were prepared appropriately to support apprentices through their practice based learning experiences. It was noted additional support was also provided to practice educators from the academic staff.

Visitors acknowledged the additional information supplied by the education provider. They confirmed they were satisfied the education provider had appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure practice educators were appropriately qualified and experienced to support apprentices and noted there were appropriate processes to monitor qualifications, experience and training.

## 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** –
  - The selection and entry criteria are clearly articulated and set at an appropriate level for the proposed programme. The entry criteria is available on the education provider's website and is accessible to applicants.
  - The information available includes academic grade requirements and criminal and health check requirements.
  - The education provider noted all criteria included both academic requirements and professional standards. We understood these aligned with apprenticeship standards for entry and meet the education provider's degree entry requirements.
  - Through clarification we noted, all apprentices would join the programme with a Level 2 qualification in Maths and English, which was the requirement for employers. Visitors noted this would satisfy the education providers entry requirements and noted the admissions documentation would need to be updated to reflect this.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - We acknowledged the education provider collaborated with stakeholders through the professional liaisons group, however it was not clear which employer they were collaborating with and who had committed to supplying the proposed programme with apprentices. This was therefore explored further through [Quality theme 1](#). Through this exploration we noted the education provider were collaborating with a number of employers. They also supplied a document detailing the number of apprentices employers would be sending on the proposed programme in 2025 and a future forecast of apprentice numbers.
  - Through clarification we noted, all practice-based learning opportunities would be provided by the employer. The contract with the employer would therefore ensure there was sufficient practice-based learning capacity for apprentices. All practice-based learning opportunities would however be audited and monitored through the formal tri-annual audits, which is the mechanism currently used for the direct entry learners. We acknowledged these audits may require tailoring to accommodate the degree apprenticeship requirements and additional checks may need to be undertaken in the early stages of the programme.

- We noted not all practice-based learning settings would be able to ensure apprentices were able to meet the SOPs and therefore alternative provision would be required for apprentices. This was explored further through [Quality theme 2](#). Through this exploration we noted employers were required to have alternative practice based learning opportunities available for apprentices before they commenced the programme. This however, only applied to those employers where apprentices were unable to meet all the SOPs.
- The staff CVs demonstrated there were an appropriate number of staff who had relevant knowledge and experience to deliver the proposed programme. Through clarification we noted, additional staff would be sourced from other areas of the school based on subject specialism and discipline and Sessional Teaching Fellows will also be used where required. The visitors therefore considered appropriately qualified and experienced staff would be involved with the delivery of the programme and acknowledged the whole school approach to teaching.
- Through clarification we noted, there were resources available to support learners, such as the virtual learning environment, the library and Aptem. Aptem was particularly useful to apprentices, as this is the apprenticeship management system and apprentices can access all information relating to Ofsted and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements. It also monitors progress and engagement, which helps practice educators, who also have access to the system. We also noted the library is in the process of making all core texts available online, which will help apprentices with access.
- The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
  - The learning outcomes were mapped against the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) mapping document and outlined in the module descriptors. The structure of the modules ensured learners will meet the SOPs.
  - 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 module descriptors and mapping documents.
  - The structure of the programme ensured the integration of theory and practice throughout. It was clear there was a strong practice-based approach, which was supported through the blended approach the education provider was using. In addition to online sessions, apprentices were also required to attend campus for 15 days in each academic year.
  - Through clarification we noted, the education provider had used the Society of Radiographers Education and Career Framework as guidance to design the curriculum. This ensured the curriculum aligned with the requirements of the HCPC, IfATE and the Society of Radiographers. We also noted how the programme was aligned to the

education providers Hallmark of a University of Portsmouth Graduate. This document sets out principles for learners and outlines the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base of the programme and provides evidence of where this is embedded.

- Through clarification we noted, there were appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the curriculum remained relevant to current practice. This ensured the curriculum aligned with the requirements of the HCPC, IfATE and the Society of Radiographers. In addition to this the programme will go through the periodic review process and an annual review process to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. These processes will involve external input, which will include employers and external examiners.
- Through clarification we noted there would be an appropriate range of teaching methods to deliver the learning outcomes. These included lectures, workshops, simulated sessions, case based learning, online resources and supervised practice in practice based settings.
- Through clarification we noted, autonomous and reflective thinking were embedded in a range of modules and assessments, including the practice modules. The programme design ensured learners were able to develop this throughout the programme and reflect on their academic and clinical experiences. Apprentices are responsible for their learning, with the support of their practice educators and are encouraged to be autonomous and take ownership of their learning.
- Through clarification we noted, throughout the programme there were a range of opportunities for learners to access evidence-based practice. Some of these opportunities are available through modules, such as Evidence Based Practice in Healthcare and others are available through the workplace settings where they reflect on how evidence-based practice is applied. This approach enables apprentices to develop their skills and knowledge in evidence-based practice and apply them.
- 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 integral to the programme. This was demonstrated through the Practice Assessment Document Guidance. As part of the programme apprentices were required to undertake 80% on the job learning with an outcome of 1080 placement hours over the duration of the course.
  - There was evidence of an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to support practice-based learning, which included practice educators. This was highlighted in the Partnership Agreement. Visitors also noted the funding the education provider had received to develop and increase the number of practice educators. However, it was not clear to them how the education provider ensured practice educators were prepared and undertaking the relevant training to support apprentices. This was explored further through [Quality](#)

[theme 3](#). The education provider explained how they used the practice educator register to monitor all training, qualifications and experience to ensure practice educators had the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to support learners.

- The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning demonstrated the learning outcomes and SOPs could be achieved. This was explored further through [Quality theme 2](#). Through this exploration we noted the employers ensured apprentices were offered a range of practice based learning opportunities to enable them to meet the SOPs.
- The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
  - The education provider described how the assessment strategy and design will ensure learners who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency. The assessment mapping document outlined how the assessments linked to the learning outcomes. Through clarification we noted how apprentices used the Practice Assessment Documents (PADs) to provide feedback and reflect on their practice. This enabled them to apply the feedback to their practice and take responsibility for their development.
  - Through clarification we noted, the assessment strategy outlined a range of assessments which enabled learners to demonstrate they were able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
  - The programme was mapped against the HCPC standards of proficiency and a range of assessment methods were used to ensure learners met these. Through clarification we noted, there were various processes in place to ensure the assessment methods were appropriate and effective at measuring the learning outcomes. This included a review of the assessment methods through the school's Assessment Scrutiny Panel, input from external examiners and continuous evaluation. These processes ensured assessments were fair, robust and aligned with professional and academic standards.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** Across the assessment, the visitors noted the standards of education and training were met at a threshold level and as such, recommend that the programme is approved.

However, they also recognised that the education provider had not yet fully finalised who the employer, or employers, will be to deliver this degree apprenticeship programme. The visitors appreciated the information provided as it was clear the education provider had worked with a range of employers in the design and development of the programme. The visitors also recognised that a number of

employers had provided an indication of the numbers of learners they would commit to enrolling on the programme.

As employers are fundamental to the design, sustainability and delivery of a degree apprenticeship programme, it is important for us to understand this relationship. Through our model, education providers retain overall responsibility, however the nature of degree apprenticeships means there is a much greater role played by the employer than in traditional models of delivery.

As these relationships had not been fully finalised, the visitors also recommend that a focused review is undertaken, within three months of the first intake to the programme, to:

- determine which employer(s) are formally involved in the delivery of the programme.
- understand if any of the policies / processes have changed, including changes to the responsibilities of the education provider or employer(s), based upon confirmation of the formal relationship.
- if changes have occurred, consider how they may impact how the programme continues to meet the standards of education and training.

## 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).

### **Referrals to the focused review process**

**Summary of issue:** Across the assessment, the visitors noted the standards of education and training were met at a threshold level and as such, recommend that the programme is approved.

However, they also recognised that the education provider had not yet fully finalised who the employer, or employers, will be to deliver this degree apprenticeship programme. The visitors appreciated the information provided as it was clear the education provider had worked with a range of employers in the design and development of the programme. The visitors also recognised that a number of employers had provided an indication of the numbers of learners they would commit to enrolling on the programme.

As these relationships had not been fully finalised, the visitors also recommend that a focused review is undertaken, within three months of the first intake, to:

- Determine which employer(s) are involved in the delivery of the programme.

- Understand if any of the policies / processes have changed, including changes to the responsibilities, based upon confirmation of the education provider and employer relationship.
- If so, consider how the changes may impact how the programme continues to meet the standards of education and training.

## 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
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report.

### **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 observations 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 2027-28 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
University of Portsmouth	CAS-01617-R6N7W3	Jason Comber Rachel Picton	<p>Through this assessment, we have noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>The staff team for the diagnostic radiography programme consists of one Programme Lead, two full time senior teaching fellows, three teaching fellows and one Degree Apprenticeship lead who is also a full-time senior teaching fellow.</li> <li>The education provider offers a range of facilities to support the programme. These include a large, dedicated space for simulation practice that includes two ward areas. This is supported by a team of experienced technicians and learners can access</li> </ul>

				these facilities for self-directed practice. There is also a virtual learning environment that has recently been updated.
<b>Programmes</b>				
<b>Programme name</b>			<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Nature of provision</b>
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Medical Imaging Degree Apprenticeship			WBL (Work based learning)	Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/08/2016
BSc (Hons) Degree Apprenticeship in Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			24/09/2024
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2015
MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-Registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2022
Professional Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psychology	PT (Part time)	Practitioner psychologist	Sports and exercise psychologist		01/09/2016
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography & Medical Imaging	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Medical Imaging	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2017
Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	02/09/2024