Approval process report

University of Bedfordshire, Paramedic Science, 2022-23

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve the Paramedic Science programme at the University of Bedfordshire. 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 all standards are met, and that the programme is approved

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The programme meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This is a new programme the education provider is seeking approval for.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • The programme is approved
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year. • The programme has been approved and will be delivered by the education provider from September 2023.

Included within this report

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 meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programmes 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
Jennifer Caldwell	Lead visitor, Occupational Therapist
Saranjit Binning	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The University of Bedfordshire have been delivering HCPC approved education since 2015. They deliver five pre-registration programmes across four professions of operating department practitioner, occupational therapy, and paramedic, and physiotherapist.

Alongside this approval request, the education provider also sought approval for the Non-Medical Prescribing programme this academic year. The recommendation for this programme to be approved was submitted to the July Education and Training Panel, where the Panel confirmed the programme was approved for delivery from September 2023.

The education provider engaged with the performance review process last academic year where they achieved a five-year review period. Therefore, their next engagement with the performance review process will be in 2026-27.

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	Occupational therapy	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2020
	Operating Department Practitioner	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2016
	Paramedic	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2015
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2020

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	119	119	2022	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.

The number of learners is the same as the benchmark, which indicates the programmes are sufficiently resourced to support the learner numbers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing | 3% | 4% | 2019-2020 | 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.

The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.

When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 1%.

We did not explore this data point through this assessment because a 1% increase does not necessarily indicate an issue and most likely accounts for a small percentage of learners who may have made the decision not to continue with the course for personal reasons. |
| Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study | 94% | 92% | 2019-2020 | This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects

The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. |

				When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 2%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because despite the 2% drop graduates are still making progress with securing employment opportunities and progressing to further study.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	June 2017	The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education." We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there were no concerns.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	78.4%	72.6%	2022	This data was sourced at the summary. This means the data is the provider-level public data. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 5.8%. We explored this data point and information relating to it and were satisfied the learning, teaching and support available to learners was sufficient.

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.
  - There are programme specific policies which apply to individual disciplines and can be found on the programme specific webpages. The information includes programme applicant guides, programme information and programme specifications.
  - This information will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - The English language requirement policy is available online and outlined in the course information forms.
  - The admissions policy and procedure relating to this area is institution wide and applies to all programmes.
  - For all HCPC approved programmes, applicants are required to complete criminal conviction checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and occupational health checks.
  - All applicants must meet the suitability criteria at the admissions stage and are therefore required to complete the pre course declaration forms. Thereafter applicants are required to complete annual declarations during their period of study.
  - These policies and procedures are institution wide and will apply to applicants for the proposed programme with some adaptations due to the applicants being apprentices.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - The Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning Policy assesses applicants' prior learning and experience and this can be accessed on the education providers website.
  - This policy 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, Diversity and Inclusion policy that applies to all staff, learners and stakeholders.
  - They have also recently updated their EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Statement. There are several other policies covering this area, such as the Access and Participation Plan and Admissions

Policy. The Health and Wellbeing Team are available to offer support to learners with disabilities and other additional learning requirements.
- o These policies and procedures apply 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[1]** –
  - o The processes and procedures outlined in the Course Information Forms (CIFS) ensure the delivery of the provision to the expected threshold level of entry to the Register for all programmes.
  - o This includes the involvement of External Examiners with all assessment processes and regular reviews of the programmes.
  - o These policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Sustainability of provision** –
  - o All programmes are included in the Faculty's Business Plan and the HCPC programmes are mapped against the relevant HCPC SOPs.
  - o To ensure the curriculum is current and there is sufficient placement capacity there is a Health and Social Care Academy within the Faculty, which is made up of senior members of staff who meet regularly to review programmes and placement capacity.
  - o This process will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o The education provider ensures they recruit appropriately qualified staff who are HCPC registered professionals, in line with the requirements outlined in the Quality Handbook.
  - o All programmes go through the periodic review process to ensure quality and currency of the programmes.
  - o These policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o Staff must engage with the personal development review process annually. To undertake their duties, they are provided with relevant training and development opportunities as outlined in the Staff Handbook.
  - o All staff are required to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching.
  - o These policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The education provider has collaborative partnerships in place, which are supported by members of the Faculty Executive.

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[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

- o The Associate Dean for External Relations specifically supports the HCPC provision with partnerships and practice-based learning.
- o These policies are institution-wide 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** –
  - o The policies and procedures for quality and monitoring programmes are outlined in the Quality Handbook. These policies ensure the continuous improvement of programmes.
  - o External Examiners are involved with reviewing all programmes and provide input into all aspects of assessments.
  - o These policies and procedures apply at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
  - o All practice-based learning sites are audited annually, and additional guidance and support is provided where needed.
  - o The education provider is committed to ensuring sufficient support is in place for learners and ensure all learners have access to a link lecturer and personal academic tutor.
  - o As part of the Fitness to Practice policy there is a Cause for Concern form that can be completed if there are concerns relating to a learner's performance.
  - o These policies and procedures apply at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learner involvement** –
  - o The education provider requires learners to be involved and have input into the design and delivery of new programmes, which is outlined in the Quality Handbook. They also encourage learners to be involved with recruitment events and undertake mentoring roles.
  - o The Student Union work closely with learner representatives and support their involvement with Student Voice Forums.
  - o There are various policies and procedures to support this area, such as the Tell Us Scheme, Bedfordshire Unit Survey and Course Enhancement Plans.
  - o These policies and procedures apply at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o Service users and carers are involved with recruitment, teaching and the development of programmes. They also participate in stakeholder meetings and events and have input into clinical sessions.
  - o This level of service user involvement will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

<u>Learners</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
  - o The Student Information Desk (SID) offers a range of services to support learners, such as financial advice, counselling, career advice and disability and dyslexia support. In addition to this they also provide learners with advice and signpost them to relevant services, including arranging appointments.
  - o All learners are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor to provide them with pastoral and academic support, which includes referral to specific support services, such as the Study Hub Team.
  - o Other policies to support learners include the Student Complaints Policy and Faculty Student at Risk Policy.
  - o These policies are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
  - o Learners are required to complete criminal conviction checks at the admissions stage and report any changes through the duration of the programme to their personal academic tutor.
  - o Suitability concerns, such as learners competence, suitability to continue their learning and health issues are considered through the Fitness to Study Policy.
  - o These policies are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
  - o Inter-professional policies are currently programme specific, however course teams are developing this across other programmes.
  - o They recognise the importance of teaching across programmes and how this will provide learners with a better understanding of roles in other disciplines and prepare them to work in multidisciplinary teams.
  - o These policies will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider demonstrates they are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and note it is a key performance indicator for this academic year, which they will be focussing on.
  - o EDI is embedded in the teaching and curriculum across all programmes.
  - o The University of Bedfordshire Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Race Equality Charter are institution wide policies and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

<u>Assessment</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** –

- o The education providers assessment procedures are outlined in the Quality Handbook and are applied to all assessments to ensure consistency and transparency across all programmes.
  - o External Examiners are involved with all elements of assessments and provide independent input into the assessments to ensure quality and academic standards are maintained.
  - o These policies are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - o The Progression and Achievement Policy applies to all programmes and therefore all course teams have a Progression and Achievement Lead. The Progression and Achievement Lead is responsible for identifying and monitoring learners at risk and providing them with relevant support.
  - o This policy is an institution wide policy and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Appeals** –
  - o The University Appeals Policy allows learners to submit an appeal against the decision of an examination board and is overseen by the Student Adjudication Team.
  - o This policy is an institution wide policy 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.

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 (Integrated Degree)	FT (Full time)	Paramedic	40 learners, one cohort per year	25/09/2023

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.

Quality theme 1 – Effective process to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning opportunities

Area for further exploration: Visitors recognised the Associate Dean for External Relations was involved with practice-based learning and supported the process. However, they were unable to find any evidence of what the process was to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning. Further information was therefore sought on how capacity would be enabled for the Paramedic Science programme and what the process for this would be. In addition to this, the visitors have also requested further information on what practice educator support is provided to learners.

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 the process to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning. It was also viewed as an effective method to obtain an explanation on the practice educator support available to learners.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider confirmed the Associate Dean for External Relations attends regular strategic meetings that link into the wider NHS England workforce planning. Meetings are also held with Primary Care Networks and Integrated Care Board partners, which helps develop cross-sector placement opportunities.

With regards to capacity of practice-based learning, they have outlined the process, which is a 4-stage process listed below.

- Stage 1 – Identify potential placements for Paramedic Science learners
- Stage 2 – Agree the terms of the placement
- Stage 3 – Educational audit
- Stage 4 – Link Lecturer support

It is clear each stage ensures all practice-based learning opportunities are appropriate and provide learners with a safe and supportive environment to learn in. Alongside this process, learners receive support from practice educators, which is outlined in the Educator handbook and on the education provider's Practice Learning website.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and acknowledged the process was robust and involved staff at various levels of the process to identify and support learners with practice-based learning.

<u>Quality theme 2 – Appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to deliver the programme</u>

Area for further exploration: Visitors noted the staff team were relatively new in their roles. However, they were unable to identify support for new staff. They therefore sought further information on how the education provider would support them to teach in Higher Education. They were interested in exploring if there were any mentoring arrangements in place for new members of staff.

It was also noted additional staff would be recruited for the programme, however there was no timeframe indicated for this. Visitors therefore sought further clarification on this.

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 when the new staff would be recruited and what support would be available for new members of staff to teach in a Higher Education setting.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained how the programme is located within the School of Society, Community and Health and therefore benefits from an inter-professional approach to teaching and learning. They acknowledge the team are new, however explained how they are supported and mentored by senior members of staff with professional registration, such as the Social Work team. Support and training was also provided by The Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence where new staff can access the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education.

With regards to the recruitment of additional staff, the education provider has agreed the staff: student ratio of 1:18 for professional programmes. Therefore, as learner numbers increase, the number of staff will increase in line with this. In their explanation they have estimated an increase in learner numbers and expect the total number of staff to rise to nine by 2027-28.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and noted the support available to new members of staff.

<u>Quality theme 3 – Learning resources available to learners</u>

Area for further exploration: Visitors acknowledged there was clear evidence of the library and support services being utilised. However, they noted there were some texts on the reading list, which were over ten years old and were no longer relevant to current practice. Further clarification was therefore requested about the process to ensure texts were kept up to date and if learners were able to access all the texts whilst on placement electronically.

In addition to this, visitors requested further information in relation to the simulation facilities and if these were shared with other programmes. The main concern they had here was that learners may have limited access to the simulation facilities due to the number of learners being able to access them, which would impact their learning experience.

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 for them to explain how they ensure the currency of the texts and access to the library and simulation facilities for learners.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider explained how the team review the reading lists annually to ensure all texts are relevant to contemporary practice. Through this review they add and remove texts to ensure learners have access to a variety of texts. In some cases, old texts are not removed as the information in them is still relevant to current practice. However, they noted there have been updates to some editions and therefore a selection of texts will be replaced soon. Reading lists are available via the Blackboard and some texts can be accessed electronically, however the selection of texts is limited and learners have to borrow the majority of texts from the library physically.

The simulation facilities are accessible to all professions who require access to them and encourages inter-professional working and shared learning. The simulation facilities are managed centrally by the Timetabling Services Team and can be booked for the profession specific skills based training. In terms of accessibility, the programme will be based at the Bedford campus where the facilities are only shared with Paediatric and Adult Nursing, which reduces the risk of clashes when planning sessions. Recently a simulation centre has been added to the main skills suite, which is mainly used by the Paramedic teams, however the education provider is promoting this new centre to encourage inter-disciplinary learning.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and were assured the education provider had processes to ensure learners had sufficient access to simulation facilities. Additionally, they were assured by the processes they had in place to ensure the currency of texts in the library.

Quality theme 4 – Appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced practice educators to support learners

Area for further exploration: It was noted all practice educators had to be registered with the HCPC. However, it was not clear what knowledge, skills and experience practice educators were required to have to supervise learners on placement and if they had to achieve a particular level of expertise or length of service. Visitors therefore sought further information from the education provider on how practice educators are prepared to support learners and how they ensure the practice educators have the appropriate qualifications and skills to support learners. As this is a degree apprenticeship programme, the visitors were unclear if practice educators would receive specific training and support. They therefore sought further information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We agreed to explore this area further by requesting both email clarification and documentary evidence from the education provider. The visitors thought this was the most effective method, to gain an understanding of the experience practice educators are required to have to supervise learners in placement.

Outcomes of exploration: All practice educators are required to be registered Paramedics and as part of the Quality Education Practice Liaison (QEPL) process the education provider has a 'Practice Educators' register, which is reviewed to ensure they are all appropriately qualified and experienced. To support them there is also a 'Practice Educator update programme'. In their response the education provider has also confirmed the training and support provided is similar to what is offered on the BSc (Hons) programme, however additional support will be required for practice educators supporting learners on the apprenticeship programme. This support will include them engaging with planning meetings and Tripartite meetings, which is required under the Apprenticeship Rules.

In addition to the above, the education provider submitted information relating to the Quality Education Practice Liaison (QEPL) meetings. These meetings take place quarterly and are used to discuss and review the training and support needs of the practice educators. Further information on the nature of the support available is outlined in the course handbooks and the Annual Practice Educator Update and Practice Educator 'toolbox' Syllabus and Structure.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and recognised the support in place to enable practice educators to deliver teaching and assessment appropriately.

Quality theme 5 – Ensuring the programme remains relevant to current practice

Area for further exploration: There was evidence of the programme being mapped against current standards and the updated SOPs being considered. However, it was not clear to visitors what mechanisms or processes the education provider had in place to ensure the programme remained relevant to current practice. Visitors therefore requested further information in relation to this area and how the programme and resources would remain current.

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 for the education provider to provide assurances on how the programme would remain relevant to current practice.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider confirmed the whole team are professionally registered and are therefore required to maintain their registration through continued CPD. Some members of staff are still in clinical practice, which assists the team with ensuring the currency of the curriculum and adjusting accordingly. The team regularly discuss changes to practice in team meetings and apply these to the programme accordingly, which ensures the continued

development of the programme. Staff also engage with new research and journals regularly to ensure they keep their practice knowledge up to date.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and noted how some staff continued to engage with clinical practice, which ensured awareness of current practice.

Quality theme 6 – Ensuring appropriate teaching across the programmes

Area for further exploration: Visitors acknowledged the good range of academic and practical activities in teaching and therefore learning. However, they noted the teaching would be shared with the BSc (Hons) programme and therefore requested further clarification on which modules would be taught together and how these were mapped across the two programmes. As part of this, they sought further information on how the shared teaching would be managed, given the learners on the apprenticeship programme would only be attending teaching once a week.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We agreed to explore this area further by requesting both email clarification and documentary evidence from the education provider. The visitors thought this was the most effective method, to gain an understanding of how the teaching would be shared across the programmes.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained the reason for sharing the teaching across the two programmes was to enhance the learning experience for the learners on both programmes. The approach they had taken with this was for the teaching of the apprenticeship programme to correspond with the BSc (Hons) programme. However, they did recognise the different modes of study and noted how occasionally learners on the two programmes would have to be taught separately. To maintain good practice, the education provider uses the East of England (EoE) Clinical Learning Environment Strategy (2022-2025), which supports them to develop good learning environments. They are currently in the process of agreeing which modules will be shared and are consulting with employers.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and acknowledged the robust plan in place to ensure aspects of teaching and learning are supported.

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

Area for further exploration: Based on the course plan and module descriptors submitted, visitors noted there might be an overlap with other programmes in terms of placements. Further clarification was therefore sought on the structure of practice-based learning. Visitors explored if there would be an overlap with the full time and apprenticeship learners in placement and if so, how this pressure would be managed by both the placement provider and the education provider. In addition to this, visitors were unable to identify how the education provider would ensure learners had access to a range of practice-based learning opportunities and therefore requested further information.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We agreed to explore this area further by requesting both email clarification and documentary evidence from the education provider. The visitors thought this was the most effective method, to understand if there would be an overlap with placements and how this would be managed.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, they outlined how practice-based learning would not overlap and explained how currently only one year group attended practice-based learning in a month-long period. Based on learner numbers and the fact that they currently have 98 practice educators for paramedic, means placement overlaps can be avoided. There are clear processes in place to manage this, however this is reviewed by QEPL when they meet quarterly and any changes in numbers are discussed further in bespoke meetings.

With regards to the range of practice-based learning opportunities, learners are provided with the opportunity to share these with the Paramedic Science learners. It is also an expectation of The East of England Clinical Learning Environment Strategy 2022-25 for learners to share practice-based learning with learners from other programmes. The aim of this strategy is to promote collaboration and Inter-Disciplinary learning.

Visitors were satisfied with the information provided in this section and noted the good liaison between the education and placement providers.

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.

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 entry criteria is available on the education providers website and is included in the Course Information Forms that can also be accessed by applicants on the website.
  - Clarification was requested on the role of the employer in the selection process. The education provider confirmed the Trust partners are invited to all the interview days and are involved with panels to discuss issues relating to DBS checks and suitability.
  - The Processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are clear, and applicants can be considered for this if they are able to demonstrate

their prior learning and experience through the submission of a portfolio of evidence.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - o The education provider demonstrated they effectively collaborate with stakeholders and regularly meet with them.
  - o There was clear evidence of sufficient placements being available, however through Quality theme 1, the education provider outlined how they ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning.
  - o Staff knowledge and expertise were demonstrated through the CVs. Visitors acknowledged there was an appropriate range and number of staff from across the School involved with the delivery of the programme. Through Quality theme 2 the education provider supplied further information on what support was available for new members of staff and when additional staff would be recruited for the programme.
  - o Visitors noted the Library and Support Services were utilised by learners, however through Quality theme 3 they clarified the processes they have in place to ensure the currency of the texts and accessing resources electronically, including the accessibility of the simulation facilities.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o The learning outcomes are clearly mapped against the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) and to the existing programme, which is already approved by the HCPC. Module descriptors are clear and include the new SOPs.
  - o There was evidence of theory and practice and a range of learning and teaching methods. Through Quality theme 6 the education provider clarified how the teaching would be shared across both programmes.
  - o There was evidence in the module descriptors, which demonstrated learners would meet the HCPC expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
  - o The philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base are clearly articulated in the structure and delivery of the programmes.
  - o Through Quality theme 5 the education provider confirmed the mechanisms they had in place to ensure the curriculum remained relevant to current practice.
  - o The module descriptors demonstrated how the education provider developed autonomous and reflective thinking. They focussed on independent learning and directed learners to be independent thinkers.
  - o Evidence based practice is demonstrated in various modules, which are delivered across all three years. As part of this, specific topics, such as mental health are delivered by subject specific professionals.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –

- o Both practice-based and academic learning are integrated throughout the programme. This is clearly articulated through the Course Plan and module descriptors.
- o There is evidence of there being an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to support practice-based learning. Through Quality theme 4 they provided further clarification on how they ensure staff are appropriately qualified and have the appropriate experience.
- o The structure and duration of practice-based learning demonstrates learners can achieve the learning outcomes and SOPs. Through Quality theme 7 the education provider explained how they ensure learners have access to a range of practice-based learning opportunities. In addition to this, further clarification was provided on the structure of placements and how there would not be an overlap with the placements for both programmes.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

SET 6: Assessment –
- o Visitors noted an appropriate range of assessments used to allow learners to develop and demonstrate a range of knowledge and skills, which includes the new SOPs. These are cited within the module descriptors.
- o The module descriptors outline the content, learning outcomes and appropriate assessment methods to demonstrate professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standard within this SET area met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: 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. The education provider has clearly demonstrated how they meet our education standards.

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 this programme.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2020
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2016
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice Integrated Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/04/2015
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2020