
Performance review process report

Nordoff Robbins, 2018 - 2021

Executive summary

Process stage – final visitor recommendation reached, covering:

The visitors have reviewed the submission and explored several themes further via quality activity. The visitors have completed their assessment and have not found a reason to refer themes or concerns to another process. The panel have confirmed an ongoing monitoring period of 2 years.

The Panel noted the visitors' recommended monitoring period of 3 years for the reasons outlined through the report. However, due to the absence of data points, a monitoring period of 2 years was the decision agreed by the Panel. The provider's collaborative engagement was positively noted by the Panel.

From their review of the submission the visitors were able to identify both some areas of good practise and some areas that required further investigation via a quality activity. The areas requiring further investigation included questions on the partnerships the provider as in place with other organisations including other providers, how learners are allocated to these organisations for their placements. Questions were asked around the providers admissions policies and how the process works for accepting learners onto course who have not studied pre-requisite but accepting them based on other means and also what support is put in place to support learners whilst on placement. Clarifications and greater insight were also sought on the providers plans to develop several policy areas, such as; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Interprofessional education. The use of technology, curriculum development and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic were also explored further via the quality activity.

The provided responded to these concerns / additional questions with a further documentary submission of 18 additional documents which included handbooks, reflective pieces and programme specifications among other documents.

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment	4
About us	4
Our standards	4
Our regulatory approach.....	4
The performance review process.....	4
Thematic areas reviewed.....	5
How we make our decisions	5
The assessment panel for this review.....	5
Section 2: About the education provider.....	6
The education provider context	6
Practice areas delivered by the education provider	6
Institution performance data	6
Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes	7
Portfolio submission.....	7
Performance data	7
Quality themes identified for further exploration	7
Quality theme 1 – Relationships with placement partner organisations	8
Quality theme 2 – Support available during placements	8
Quality theme 3 –Plans for interprofessional learning	9
Quality theme 4 – Equality and Diversity in admissions and the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) working group.....	10
Quality theme 5 – Changes made because of the pandemic.....	11
Quality theme 6 – National Student Survey. Feedback, how is it used and acted upon	12
Quality theme 7 – Office for Students (OFS) membership and impact on the support in place for disabled learners.....	13
Quality theme 8 – Policies and plans for service user and carer (SU&C) involvement.....	13
Quality theme 9 – Assessment for teaching quality and tutor mentoring system	14
Quality theme 10 – Relationships with other Education providers	14
Quality theme 2 – Further admissions information	15
Section 4: Summary of findings.....	16
Overall findings on performance	16
Quality theme: Institution self-reflection	16
Quality theme: Thematic reflection.....	19
Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection	20
Quality theme: Profession specific reflection.....	22
Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions	23
Data and reflections	24
Section 5: Issues identified for further review.....	25
Referrals to next scheduled performance review.....	25
Learner support services to be included in the handbook	25
Interprofessional learning.....	25

Service User and Carer Involvement. 25

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes..... 25

 Assessment panel recommendation..... 26

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution 28

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Master of Music Therapy (Nordoff Robbins): Music, Health, Society	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Music therapy		01/09/2014

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 performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

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

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:

- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

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 a review of this education provider:

Nicholas Haddington	Lead visitor, Independent Prescribing
Rachel Bell	Lead visitor, Arts Therapist, Music Therapy
SU expert advisor name	Service User Expert Advisor
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 1 approved programmes across 1 profession area. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1995.

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	Arts therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1995

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.

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	45	45	2022	This data is very recent and shows that the number of learners matches the number the programme was originally approved for and the visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	Null	2019-2020	There is no data available at this data point. This could be as provider is validated by another provider here. HESA does not hold this data for them therefore this section cannot be completed. We do ask providers to reflect on this or provide alternative data points. A lack of data points can lead to a shorter review period.

Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	3%	Null	2019-2020	There is no data available at this data point. This could be as provider is validated by another provider here. HESA does not hold this data for them therefore this section cannot be completed. We do ask providers to reflect on this or provide alternative data points. A lack of data points can lead to a shorter review period.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A		2017	There is no data available at this data point. This could be as provider is validated by another provider here. TEF does not hold this data for them therefore this section cannot be completed. A lack of data points can lead to a shorter review period.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	Null		2021	There is no data available at this data point. This could be as provider is validated by another provider here. OFS does not hold this data for them therefore this section cannot be completed. A lack of data points can lead to a shorter review period.

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the [thematic areas reviewed](#) section of this report.

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Performance data

- No data points have been identified or supplied.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. 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 was performing well against our standards.

Quality theme 1 – Relationships with placement partner organisations

Area for further exploration: The portfolio demonstrates the provider has partnerships in place with 220 organisations and also a robust system to monitor practise-based learning sites. We were however unsure of how many of these partner organisations were practise-based learning providers. We decided to explore in further detail how learners are allocated at practise-based learning sites where teaching staff are also practitioners. Further details and reflections on nature of the relationships with the 220 partner organisations would help inform the visitors overall assessment and review.

The presentation of additional information would be helpful for us to gain greater insight into the relationships in place and the nature of these relationships. We already noted several strong partnerships in place, but one key partnership in particular is time limited. We therefore hope to gain a sense of the providers plans beyond this and how certain situations are resolved within the partnerships such as learner allocation.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We received further clarifications and a narrative description on the relationships with practise-based learning providers. It demonstrated a significant number of partnership organisations are in place majority of which have Nordoff Robbins staff within them. The evidence also indicates an oversupply of placements (greater than required). We note the significant placement capacity means that each placement setting will not necessarily have learners onsite continuously and therefore there is a need for an appropriate mechanism for supervisors to maintain their supervision expertise within this context. We noted that this information expanded on how the different relationships, such as their relationship with their validating university, work in practise. We had no further concerns following the quality activity.

Quality theme 2 – Support available during placements

Area for further exploration: We note that there are robust mechanisms in place to ensure placement quality and placement management / oversight. We also note the mechanisms such as the buddy system and placement information is made available for learners. Visitors wanted to explore further the range of support available on placements and what other mechanisms aside from those mentioned, are available. We note from the submission that the provider has plan to expand their workforce of music therapists by drawing from their pool of graduates. What was unclear was how learners are equipped to practice more widely if they do not become employed within

this model. It was also unclear from their submission what quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure teaching quality from tutors. Furthermore, how are these benchmarked against evidenced-based teaching practices in higher education?

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission (such as for the MMT Handbook), to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We received further reflections and clarifications and also some additional documents in the form of the requested handbook. We gained greater insight from the handbook and the providers additional reflections, this includes how placement supports meet with learners weekly and what support and resources are available for learners on placement. We note the providers further clarifications on employment and the aim of the programme is to equip learners to become fully qualified and competent music therapists. They also discussed their Graduate Employment Scheme (GES) that is an attractive option for learners / graduates seeking to work for Nordoff Robbins post studying, but also that this is one of several routes that also includes working in the NHS, in a care environment, commercial / private sector roles or even setting up their own businesses / practises.

We also noted that information on how to access student support services was missing from the handbook and believe that having this information in the handbook could be helpful for the learners. This was something that the provider can reflect on and consider for their next performance review. We had no further concerns and did not identify any risks going forward.

Quality theme 3 –Plans for interprofessional learning

Area for further exploration: We noted from the submission Interprofessional learning (IPL) is in place and learners are exposed to IPL, but this appears to be limited to placements and with some learners having a greater exposure to this than others. The IPL strategy in place did not appear strong and also not embedded into the programme, the strategy going forward as presented does not appear to strengthen this. We explored how this will develop going forward and what other features are in place currently. We note from the submission the providers academic plan but were unable to identify what opportunities are available for co-learning and how this would work in practise. It was also difficult to gain a sense of the duration of such activities.

We also note the provider's development of their inter-professional learning with their verification provider; however, the timeframe involved in this process was not clear. We explored the provider's inter-professional learning plans to ensure these are robust and effectively embedded into their processes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We received further explanations and clarifications from the provider via a narrative document. This included clarifications on their IPL strategy and information on their provision running alongside nursing programmes, what each learner will gain and experience from IPL. They have also discussed the challenges they face; this includes the interruptions to IPL from the covid-19 pandemic and also the provider not being a large HEI (Higher Education Institution) with an IPL department to provide support. They have worked to establish links and opportunities for IPL with their partner validating university and also other providers. They discussed how following the lifting of restrictions their IPL has largely resumed.

We explored the provider's expansion plans for increasing and enhancing inter-professional learning in the future. This includes their plans to increase their collaborative sessions with other providers, both online and in-person. Their inclusion of Art therapy learners in their next 'intensive weekend' which brings together staff and learners from their three teaching bases. We also note their plans to develop an inter-professional learning opportunity with occupational therapists from another provider.

We concluded the extra information supplied assures us the IPL is in place. But that this should be seen as an area for development and to be reflected upon and enhanced for the next Performance review. We note the additional reflections and the information in the programme handbook, they did feedback this is still limited but also that they gained insight on expert advisors coming to support the programme. Furthermore, potential links with other providers is being considered and we would like to see this further developed by the next review. Following the additional information and insight we had no further concerns or questions.

Quality theme 4 – Equality and Diversity in admissions and the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) working group

Area for further exploration: We note that the provider has an EDI strategy in place, which is embedded, well developed and reflected upon well. We found good resources available for low-income students accessing the course such as the full fee-waiver and found the feedback from the External Examiner on this point to be positive. We did however have a concern regarding the admission processes reflected upon at this section we wished to explore further. Specifically, the policy and processes in place seem to suggest applicants are required to share details of physical and mental health problems as part of the application process. We determined this may constitute a risk and wanted to gain further information on this process.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We note further explanations and clarifications in response to our questions. We found that the quality activity submission provides us

with a much more thorough account of the systems in place, such as the EDI taskforce.

Additionally, the provider provided clarity on the visitors concern around the questioning that takes place in the admissions process. They provided examples of the questions asked and explained how this is used to ascertain what support a learner may have and also that learners do not have to share anything they don't want to. Furthermore, the provider refers to their reasoning behind this approach with it being in-line with HCPC's Standards of Proficiency (SOPs). This additional information allowed us to conclude that the general principles in place and approach being taken are good, meeting what we would expect at the threshold level. Following this additional information and insight the visitors had no further concerns or questions on this section.

Quality theme 5 – Changes made because of the pandemic

Area for further exploration: We note from the submission how the Provider has been resourceful in their management during the pandemic and note they submitted an honest account of the impact they faced. The information provided was not clear with regards to the actual changes which were made. As a result, we explored their engagement with their validating university during this period, how they moved to the online method of delivery and how staff were supported during this period. We wanted to understand how the provider ensured the covid pandemic did not adversely impact the delivery of their programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider responded with additional reflections and clarifications addressing our queries. We explored their information which they explained how they adapted their approach to delivery of their programmes as a result of the pandemic. They had identified very early the impact the pandemic would have on the ability for learners to develop their craft skills and began making plans to move their teaching online. They explained the planning process which included meetings between the tutorial team to discuss how ensure learners were able to continue their learning. The provider was already using Zoom prior to pandemic which enabled them to an online timetable quickly and they purchased corporate licenses for tutors. The move online was overall successful, and they provided appropriate support to learners who need it. They explained how teaching was adjusted and how innovative techniques were adopted to support learners.

We explored their updates about the limitations of being a small provider without a dedicated technical team. As a result, an external company was contracted to provide all technical support and training. This company provided all the hardware and software support for all learners and staff. We also explored the information provided which explained how staff were supported during this period. Staff were provided with the required specialist equipment's to enable online teaching. Regular meeting was held online which focused on online teaching and assessment. This enabled the staff to develop the skills and knowledge of using Zoom.

They engaged with their validating university throughout the pandemic and supported them with regards to the transition to online learning. Colleagues with the validating university's Academic Partnerships, were highly supportive in terms of helping us to demonstrate compliance with their Covid adjustments to regulations etc.

Following the additional information and clarifications supplied we had no further questions or concerns going forward.

Quality theme 6 – National Student Survey. Feedback, how is it used and acted upon

Area for further exploration: We note that the provider is not part of the NSS, so feedback is conducted and held internally only. We wanted to explore how the anonymous surveys impact curriculum design. From the submission we could not determine if there is a robust system in place for addressing feedback as it arises. It would be helpful for us to understand how feedback is acted upon and how the provider captures feedback on specific areas. Specifically, how feedback on programme effectiveness and feedback on programme experience is captured and reviewed. This was explored to better understand how feedback is used and also how learners, service users, placement providers feed-back on the programme and how this feedback is utilised.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider responded with additional reflections and clarifications. They explained the processes they have in place and set out how data is used and how it feeds into iterative programme improvements. They explained how if the feedback relates to an unfolding situation, then the base coordinator will work to resolve any issues immediately. They also discussed how feedback is collected to be reviewed as part of the Programmes Committee to implement any changes, they also bring in their partner validating university to these conversations who will be able to input from their own experiences. They discuss an example of how this leads to change in the form of feedback on learners' work being passed to learners and the importance of feedback being sensitive, constructive and helpful.

They also discussed how external feedback is collected and acted upon, this includes from their partner validating provider. This feedback comes in both formal and informal routes, through mechanisms such as the 'Academic Link', the external examiner and the 'Annual Validation Partnership Review'. Feedback gained here is recorded and used in future planning and rooting for any consequent proposed changes or developments. They also gain feedback from placement provider institutions via catch ups and feedback forms, they also explain that some placement

providers are more forthcoming than others in feeding back, and they are working to have feedback from all placement providers recorded going forward. They aim to achieve this through their new 'logging system' to record and track feedback from all their partners.

Following the additional information and clarifications supplied we had no further questions or concerns going forward.

Quality theme 7 – Office for Students (OFS) membership and impact on the support in place for disabled learners

Area for further exploration: We note that the provider is not currently registered with the OFS but is in the process of applying. Additionally, they are applying for 'low level' registration to allow learners to claim financial aid. We decided to explore what this application process involves, and also why the provider has not sought membership beforehand. They noted that the reason for applying now was partly to allow learners access to the financial aid, but it was unclear what support is currently in place for disabled students or how have disabled students been supported that could not access Disable Students Allowance (DSA) currently.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider submitted additional narrative and clarifications, explaining how they sought OFS membership in 2019 and had not required it before as learners were able to access funding via the 'career development loan' (whose abolition led the provider to seek OFS membership). They also explained how OFS membership applications were frozen due to the pandemic. They have arrangements in place to support disabled learners, such as making dyslexia assessments available, providing assistance and guidance in timetable management and also making additional software available to support learners with dyslexia and dyspraxia. They expand further that they have a dedicate budget for this and can also draw on their charitable status where necessary to facilitate this. Following this further information, we had no further questions or concerns.

Quality theme 8 – Policies and plans for service user and carer (SU&C) involvement

Area for further exploration: We noted from the submission that the provider's 'User Voice' policy is being reviewed and there are intentions and desires to increase SU&C input and involvement. Furthermore, they noted that there is a clear commitment and strategic direction to develop meaningful input to the programme. However, this seems to have not yet been realised, we note that the provider has taken steps to involve SU&Cs in the programme but that this needs further development to ensure it is built into the programme. Additionally, we sought feedback from the SU&C advisor who also reviewed this part of the submission, who along with the visitors note that more work needs to be done in integrate SU&Cs into the processes. Further details and clarifications on what policies / plans are in place for SU&C involvement would be useful for us to complete our assessment.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider responded to the quality activities with additional reflections / clarifications and evidence. They discuss that they maintain 'pipeline documents' for sourcing Expert by Lived Experience (ELE's) in the three regions with appropriate expertise who may be outside their network. The information provided in the quality activity is much more expansive than the initial submission and demonstrates how SU&Cs are currently involved in their processes. We note that this resolves our concerns, but this could be improved going forward and to be looked at the next performance review.

Quality theme 9 – Assessment for teaching quality and tutor mentoring system

Area for further exploration: We note from the submission that the provider collects data internally as they are not part of HESA, that the majority of quality assurance is conducted internally and in partnership with their validating university. But we were unable to gain as sense of how teaching quality is formally assessed. We can see the internal mentor system in place but wanted to explore what higher education training is in place for tutors.

We explored the programme performance data, in the absence of data points to allow the provider to submit further information and insight.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We noted in the response that the systems and procedure in place are made much clearer and the mapping to performance standards framework was very useful with the opportunities for fellowships of the HEA sounding like a promising development. We have no further concerns following this additional information and feel that this area has been covered at threshold level. They also fed back that specific APEL data was not provided and that at the next Performance review it would be useful for the provider to reflect and discuss attrition data, particularly on learners who enter from APEL route. Following the additional information and clarifications supplied we had no further questions or concerns going forward.

Quality theme 10 – Relationships with other Education providers

Area for further exploration: We also noted one strong relationship with another education provider in particular, but also note that this partnership is renewed for two years, it was not clear what will happen when this expires. We would also find it useful for further information on partner organisations where staff work across

different providers. The visitors decided to explore this further via a quality activity to better understand the providers approach to this areas and plans going forward.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We found that the additional information supplied gave some useful clarity and demonstrates that a significant number of partnership organisations are in place, the majority of which have Nordoff Robbins staff within them. We also note that the evidence indicates an oversupply of placements (greater than required) and this could mean that some placement settings will not necessarily have learners onsite continuously and therefore there is a need for an appropriate mechanism for supervisors to maintain their supervision expertise. We found the additional information expanded on how the different relationships such as their relationship with their validating university, work in practise. We note how they defined their 'partner organisations (PO's) and that each of these will have a music therapist working in at least one day a week. Nordoff Robbins employs over 100 registered and qualified music therapists that work on their own sites and also with their PO's. This network of PO's engages with them directly through their regional managers and not all PO's are placement organisations, their managers work in their defined Nordoff Robbins regions and manage these partnerships.

Following the additional information and clarifications supplied we had no further questions or concerns going forward.

Quality theme 2 – Further admissions information

Area for further exploration: We note from the providers admissions processes, that learners can be accepted onto the programme without studying the pre-requisite qualifications. Their acceptance can instead be based on other means. However how this works in practise and what these others means was not made clear.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on this point via email communication and where appropriate an additional documentary submission to allow the provider to elaborate on the previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: We received further information and clarifications on the providers APEL procedures and policies, this includes welcoming applicants without undergraduate degrees and also allowing these learners to demonstrate their experience / qualifications gained in other ways. This could include a reflective portfolio of relevant work they have undertaken, or an extended review essay of readings set by the provider, all followed with an open conversation with the applicant about their situation and level of work that will be required. We found the expansions on this useful for us to understand how this works in practise, we had no concerns going forward.

Section 4: Summary of findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
 - The provider's business model differs from traditional HEI's due to them being a charity. They discussed the mechanisms that they have available to secure funding which primarily includes fundraising through their connection to the music industry and the BRIT trust. They have said how this is supplemented through income received from learner's fees and income. They have also discussed the challenges that they have faced in recent years to this including the impact of the covid pandemic which led to them having to withdraw funds from their reserves. The funds in reserve allowed them to continue to operate securely.
 - The visitors found the provider to be performing well in this area, having sufficient funding and structure in place for planned provision and reserves in place to support their current cohort. The provider's annual report gives clarity on their financial position with auditors supporting its sustainability.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - The provider has referred to the many (220) partnerships in place with a variety of partner organisations. They have discussed how education is at the heart of their activities as a charity, and how they train existing musicians to be music therapists on their programme. They also explained how they employ music therapists from their partner organisations as tutors on their programmes. Partner organisations are also involved in providing practised-based learning, demonstrating the good working relationships they have with their partners. They have also reflected on the partnerships they have with other education providers, and this includes providers outside of the UK.
 - Quality theme one looks at practise-based learning partnerships the provider has in place. It explores how placements are identified and the quality assessments involved. They also asked more for information on how the allocation of placements work and how the effectiveness is judged. Additionally what enablers and the barriers to the relationship of the accrediting organisation(s) exist.
 - Through the quality activity the provider was able to further clarify the policies and procedures that they have in place. They detailed the numbers of partnerships that they have in place and how the provider's staff on many occasions work within their placement organisations. The

Visitors noted the expansion on how this and how this works in practise and had no further concerns going forward.

- **Academic and placement quality –**

- The provider submitted detailed information on this portfolio area and discussed how placements are developed through their “Regions” model. This allows them to determine capacity and availability for placements, monitor quality and ensure safe practise environments. They discuss the different ways that academic quality is assessed / monitored via learner-tutor meetings, resource and teaching materials available, anonymous online surveys and the teaching / mentoring scheme.
- The provider reflects on the different challenges, successes and development / innovations they have encountered and worked through. These include challenges posed by the pandemic such as learners being unable to attend placements, online working etc. Successes include the positive external examiner reports in 2020 and 2021 and the speed at which they transitioned to teaching online. They also noted successes of online learning with the range of options available and the flexibility it provides. The Provider has also grown as a teaching team with a third training base being opened, they have developed a tutor mentoring and support scheme to support new educators.
- The visitors noted their reflections and acknowledged that the provider has reflected well and adapted to the challenges raised by the pandemic. The visitors did however also have some questions that were explored via a quality activity outlined in quality theme one regarding the providers admissions processes. We noted also that information on how to access student support services was missing from the handbook and believe that having this information in the handbook could be helpful for the learners. This is something the provider could consider for the next performance review.

- **Interprofessional education –**

- The provider discusses how they are focused on music therapy, but this focus can limit the opportunities for interprofessional learning. Additionally, they reflect that they had good working relationships with learners (particularly nursing) at other education providers, but with the onset of the pandemic this in-person interaction could not take place and subsequently many nursing learners were drafted to help support the wider NHS.
- In developments they have reflected in reference to the challenges of the pandemic and that they have worked to develop online formats of interprofessional learning with other education providers. In successes they have reflected in the success of an online event they held in 2021 which included meaningful, creative discussions of learners. The feedback from learners after this event was also very positive, many learners requested more events like this to follow and found the collaboration very useful and enabling connections in times of isolation.
- The visitors noted this creative / experimental session, but also felt this demonstrates that IPE is not embedded into the providers processes.

This was explored further via a quality activity where the provider responded with further clarifications / reflections. The visitors found that this response along in conjunction with their previous reflections show that the provider is meeting the threshold level. But could develop this further and this is something they could consider before their next Performance Review.

- **Service users and carers –**

- The provider has discussed how service users are at the centre of everything they do and how they talk / think about their work. They reflect further on the desire to involve service users and carers and also on the mitigation of risk. They recognise that anyone could be vulnerable, and processes must be in place before they can consider involving people in talks or teaching. They discuss the mechanisms they have in place to support external involvement, including allowing of a companion to be brought in, having an experienced member of staff responsible for coordination of service users and finally having mechanisms in place to gather feedback from service users and carers. Moving forward they outline how they are building a database of service users and carers that are willing to work with them, furthermore how online mechanisms such as zoom has assisted involvement and made this more accessible.
- The visitors noted their reflections but wanted to gain more information of the actual plans / policies in place to involve service users and carers going forward. This is outlined in quality theme eight and shows how the provider responded to the visitors queries with clarifications and additional reflections. Following this the visitors noted this area as an area to be developed and reflected upon during their next Performance Review.

- **Equality and diversity –**

- The provider detailed the processes in place and developments that have occurred during the review period. They reflect on how their partnerships with other providers has influenced this and that their approach is not tokenistic or tokenistic but are instead embedding this into their processes. They discuss seminars that they have introduced around the idea of equality, diversity and power relations. Additionally, they have embedded equality and diversity into their admission processes and their establishment of an EDI task force as a working group to look at how the institution approaches equality and diversity.
- They reflect on the challenges they have faced, including the inherent lack of diversity in the field of music therapy and the challenges faced by those seeking therapy with the financial challenges involved. Their successes and developments during the review period include commendations by their external examiner on learner engagement. They also state that they have increased their marketing to show that prospective applicants need not to have a first degree or come from a classical music background and advertising the bursary support they have in place.
- The visitors note that the equality and diversity strategy in place is embedded and well developed and reflected on well and also that the external examiner's feedback is positive. Additionally, that there are

good resources in place for low-income learners and that learners are involved through having an SU rep as part of the EDI working group. The visitors did have a concern around the providers admissions process that was explored further via quality theme four.

- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The provider has reflected on how they are deeply concerned about the music education in the UK and the inequalities of accessibility to high quality provision. They believe this could lead the sector becoming generally less diverse and less reflective of society as a whole. They see both challenges and opportunities in pursuit of the delineation of music therapy and social-musical focused craft. They discuss their place in the field of music therapy and how they are positioned to enhance music therapy, training, research and how they are committed to remaining at the forefront of this training, investing where necessary to sustain this going forward.
 - The visitors noted from this section that the provider has reflected well and recognised the challenges that exist within music education and that they have taken steps to address this through their 10-year strategy. They note that the provider is actively engaging with other organisations to raise the profile of music education more widely and work toward the delineation of music therapy from other initiatives. The visitors found the provider to be performing to threshold level and raised no quality activities to explore further.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: Risk identified in relation to equality and diversity in the admissions process. This was explored via a quality activity and the visitors' concerns were assured and no ongoing risk was determined.

Outstanding issues for follow up: Visitors noted to areas of feedback that the provider could consider for their next performance review, but no issues to refer to another process.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Impact of COVID-19 –**
 - The provider has used this section initially to provide some reflections relating to the onset of the pandemic. They refer to involvement in the 'Resonance Project', to the challenges posed by the lockdown and with none of the teaching staff being familiar with zoom. Among their challenges they list learners being unable to engage with placements, and how in response to this they worked to develop a number of activities, scenarios and 'placement scenario' documents, to support the learners in achieving their learning outcomes and provide a framework / plan for what is required when placements were accessible. By June 2020 some placement sites were offering online placements and, in some cases, hosting learners onsite. But this too had its challenges, such as the uneven levels of learning and engagement between those onsite and those online, exacerbated by internet connectivity issues.

- The visitors noted that the provider in general appears to have been resourceful in managing the impact of the pandemic. They found their reflections and account to be honest and open with a good level of detail on how the challenges were addressed and managed.
- The visitors explored this area further through quality activity five, with questions around the transition to online learning, the role of the teaching staff and the ongoing support which will be provided to staff. Through expansions made we gained information on the technical support in place and note how the provider responded to the pandemic, thought purposefully on how to use the developments / lessons learnt from the pandemic going forward.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - The provider has referred to this in their reflections on the impact of Covid-19 but has expanded in this section. They repeat the challenges noted to this area such as the move to online teaching in the height of the pandemic but have also discussed the importance of data collection both in terms of recorded sessions and statistical / service level data. Learners were provided with guidance on the type of technology they can purchase to record sessions and to enable online working during the first lockdown. They identified the ability to deliver seminars effectively on Zoom as one of their successes. This technology has also been used for interviews and continued engagement with international partners. They plan to continue using Zoom for their 'Intensive Weekend' which brings staff and learners from their three sites together.
 - The visitors note their reflections but did raise a quality activity around their partnership with their validating university, this was explored in quality theme 10. In addition to the feedback presented in this section the visitors specifically noted a purposeful approach to use technology where appropriate. The quality activity's additional reflections are a useful narrative giving greater insight into the providers approach.
- **Apprenticeships –**
 - Provider has reflected that at present they are not involved with any apprenticeships either directly through their own provision or through partner provision. They reflect on the challenges they would face in trying to develop such a programme and also that they are focused on their provision and the benefits of their programme as it is and are not convinced this could be easily transferred into an apprenticeship-style programme.
 - The visitors have noted the providers reflections and reasons for not engaging in an apprenticeship. The visitors note that it could be an interesting area for the provider to explore or a good innovation to consider going forward for the provider

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
 - The provider details that their relationship with QAA is mediated by their validating body and as such they do not receive direct feedback from QAA. They are familiar with the Code and find it useful to incorporate into their own QA processes. Since 2020 they have been self-assessing against the code and note this as a success, focusing their team to think concisely about standards and quality and to report on this to the senior leadership team and wider charity. The visitors noted this and identified the provider's system of self-assessment against the code as an area of good practise.
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies –**
 - The providers submission discusses approaching prospective placement partnership organisations and how they are generally led by their pre-existing knowledge of their working relationships with these organisations. They also refer to publicly available assessments that exist, such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) of prospective organisations. They reflect that they tend to prefer providers that are performing well and avoid those deemed to be failing. They also have a system in place to organise a visit for selected providers to assess the suitability ahead of any decision being made.
 - The visitors noted their reflections and their use of CQC and OFSTED and how provider selection is based largely around pre-existing relations. They found this reflected on well and the system for choosing practise-based providers to be a good system and note it as an area of good practise.
 - They did however have some questions they wanted to explore further via a quality activity relating to learner feedback. This was explored as part of quality theme 6 which also looks at the national student survey (below). Following this it was much clearer how data is used and how it feeds into iterative programme improvements.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes –**
 - The provider refers to how they are not covered by the NSS and therefore conduct their own internal and anonymous surveys. They state that these are detailed, help provide feedback on teaching, placement provision, assessment procedures and are well received and responded too. They have experienced very positive feedback in general from learners, but this also provides a space for learning points or criticisms that is then taken forward to higher management.
 - We explored this further via a quality activity / quality theme 6 on how feedback is used and acted upon. Finding this to be a good response and clearly setting out how data is used and feeds programme improvements.
- **Office for Students monitoring –**
 - In this section the provider discusses how they are not currently members of the Office for Students (OFS) but are in the process of applying for membership. Additionally detailing the support previously and currently in place for learners.

- We note their reflections and their in-progress application to the OFS. The visitors had a few questions that they explored further via a quality activity, and this was explored in quality theme 7 that clarifies the previous and current situations and also explores the nature of support for students with disability.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - The provider has referred to their relationship with their professional body, the British Association of Music Therapy (BAMT) and how their committee works. They discuss that the aim is for the two to support each other and provide information, furthermore that they have found this relationship particularly helpful during the height of the pandemic.
 - The visitors recognised this and their regular engagement with BAMT's executive committee and the pooling of resources. Concluding that the Provider is maintaining good links with their professional body via this medium.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:

- The visitors have identified an area of good practise in relation to the providers self-assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Noting that whilst they do not have a direct relationship with the QAA, the practise of completing self-assessments against the code voluntarily is an area of good practise and should be commended.
- The visitors also identified an area of good practise in relation to the provider's system that they have in place to identify and assess potential further practise-based learning partner organisations.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - The Provider has discussed the principal challenges they identified which they believe also applies to the profession at large. This being diversity and is something they recognise they should address and commit to developing. They have a variety of mechanisms that they have put in place to work towards this, this includes recognising areas that have a historical lack of diversity and opening up avenues to increase participation of learners from all backgrounds. This includes removing the requirement for learners to be able to read and play sheet music and also encouraging learners to incorporate / draw upon all types of music.
 - We had questions and areas we wished to explore further after their initial review. This revolved around how the curriculum was developed more broadly, and also what plans were in place for the sharing of research of new methods or practice. This was explored in quality theme two and the visitors found their response narrative provided useful insight and details of their approach to curriculum development. Concluding that the provider has demonstrated how this is embedded

into their 10-year strategy and how they are preparing for re-validation in 2025.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - The provider has details how The British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT) does not issue formal guidance, but their Training Education Committee (TEC) does provide an opportunity for all programme leads to meet and exchange information and knowledge on their experiences
 - The visitors note their reflections here and also their commitment to increasing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), the visitors did ask for some clarifications around the future EDI audit including when this is planned for and what would be involved. This quality activity was covered in the EDI section of the portfolio review and discussed / explored further in quality theme 4, the visitors had no concerns going forward.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning –**
 - The provider has used this section to reflect on their unique positioning, having access to a vast array of potential placement organisations via their existing relationships with their partner organisations. They also discuss the challenges that covid has presented, particularly in relation to placements with some placement providers closing permanently. They have also given some detail on the placements themselves, with the first placement being run by the provider and placements two and three by their partners. Additionally, they provide some details on the placement packs and advice given to learners.
 - We recognised wide practice-based learning opportunities within the organisation and that it is positive the provider was able to manage this through covid. We did have areas to explore further via a quality activity, but concerns here were covered in the 'partnerships with other organisations' section of the portfolio and quality theme 1.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners –**
 - The provider has discussed their registration with the Office of the Independent adjudicator and also that they have received no complaints in relation to their approved programmes and as such have not had to escalate any complaints.
 - The visitors have noted this and the learner feedback which suggests that they feel supported, furthermore that no complaints have been escalated beyond the provider level. They had a further question that related to the National Student Survey, but this was explored in an earlier section and via quality activity theme 6.
- **Practice placement educators –**
 - The provider discusses their unique positioning in relation to the portfolio area. The placement educators are drawn from their own

employees and these employees highly value this interaction and use it to contribute to their continuing professional development assessments (CPD). In parts two and three of the programme they identify a placement supporter with the placement organisation and ensure regular contact throughout and are invited to provide feedback following their involvement.

- The visitors reviewed this section and did outline a potential risk, this being that the support provided to learners whilst on placement is dependent on the relationship between the provider and the placement organisation / staff being strong. However, they are assured at the levels of robust support and monitoring in place from the Provider to assure this and assure the learners remain supported throughout. They also noted the positive feedback from placement therapists and supporters.
- **External examiners –**
 - The provider has detailed how their External Examiner (EE) is appointed by their validating university and also how they have valued the role throughout their relationship with them. They discuss some of the duties of the EE, including reviewing samples of work by learners and attending end of programme presentations given by learners. The provider is also looking to develop new ways of utilising their EE that can help challenge and develop their teaching practices. They are doing this by allowing suggestions and feedback from the EE some of this such as arrange more regular meetings between learners and tutors and ensuring consistent use of the Harvard referencing system are already being implemented.
 - The visitors noted that the providers reflections demonstrate that this relationship is valued relationship and that the provider listens to and implements suggestions of their examiner.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel: We note that data is collected internally, and that provider is not a part of HESA, the data comes from a small cohort therefore it is hard to learn much from this data. Quality assurance mostly comes from exercises completed by their validating university. In total the data suggests six learners have withdrawn from the providers provision since 2015 which the visitors remarked as sufficiently low. We also note that a high proportion of learners gain employment soon after graduation. To this end the provider seems to be performing well based on the data available.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We raised some queries that they explored via quality activity / theme two looking specifically at how teaching quality was assessed and what training is available for tutors. The provider responded with further information that provided useful clarifications, this included a mapping document to the performance standards framework. We found this useful

for our review and demonstrated the opportunities for fellowships of the HEA, which appears to be a promising development

Outstanding issues for follow up: Visitors noted that specific data on the APEL (Assessing Prior Education and Learning) route for admission was not supplied. At the next performance review, it would be useful to discuss attrition data particularly on learners who enter from APEL route.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Learner support services to be included in the handbook

Area(s) of practice applicable to: Programme handbook

Summary of issue: The visitors found following their review of the programme handbook that information on how to access support services was missing from the handbook and believe that having this information in the handbook could be helpful for learners. This was something that they believe the provider should reflect on and consider for their next performance review.

Interprofessional learning

Summary of issue: The visitors concluded following their review and the additional information supplied as part of the quality activity, that Interprofessional learning is in place. But also, that this area is under-developed and underutilised. The visitors therefore recommend that this area is developed further and reflected upon during the providers next performance review.

Service User and Carer Involvement.

Summary of issue: The visitors concluded following their review and the additional information supplied as part of the quality activity, that Service User and Carer Involvement does occur, and plans are in place. But also, that this area is under-developed and underutilised. The visitors therefore recommend that this area is developed further and reflected upon during the providers next performance review.

Assessing Prior Education and Learning Data

Summary of issue: Visitors noted that specific data on the APEL (Assessing Prior Education and Learning) route for admission was not supplied. At the next performance review, it would be useful to discuss attrition data, particularly on learners who enter from APEL route.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2024-25 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report

Reason for this recommendation: The visitors found that the provider has supplied a detailed and thoughtful submission. Furthermore, that they have engaged openly and constructively with the areas the visitors explored further via quality activities and that following their review the visitors have no ongoing concerns. Further to this the visitors have been able to identify several areas of good practise from the providers submission that is to be commended and celebrated. This includes the system they have in place to identify and develop new placement provision and their self-assessment against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The visitors did identify some areas that they are recommending for further thought and development and these have been identified throughout the report and highlighted in section 5.

These do not culminate in a risk to the approved programmes or constitute a risk to standards or learning outcomes being met. The visitors wanted to be mindful of their feedback and also set an ongoing monitoring period of sufficient length to allow for these developments to take place and be reviewed again. They therefore felt that 3 years was sufficient enough given the position the provider holds with their adherences to the UK quality code for higher education and their application to OFS (which should provide a data point by next review). Furthermore, we can consider the monitoring that occurs via their registration with the Office of the Independent adjudicator and their relationship with their validating body / university.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee met on 30/11/2022 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 education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2023-24 academic year

Reason for this decision: The Panel noted the visitors' recommended monitoring period of 3 years for the reasons outlined through the report. However, due to the absence of data points, a monitoring period of 2 years was the decision agreed by the Panel. We ask Providers to respond to us with a set of data points that helps inform our ongoing monitoring. These being data on learner continuation rates, graduate outcomes, teaching quality and learner satisfaction. The provider in this instance does not have certain data points available (not a member of HESA, OFS, NSS, TEF) and therefore we do not have these externally verifiable data points to work with. Therefore, the panel have decided a 2-year monitoring period is more

appropriate and for the executive to work with the provider to help establish these data points going forward.

The provider's collaborative engagement was positively noted by the Panel. The panel noted specifically that they recognised the areas of good practise as set out by the visitors and also the considerable efforts the provider had made in responding / reflecting on all areas of the portfolio.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Master of Music Therapy (Nordoff Robbins): Music, Health, Society	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Music therapy		01/09/2014