Approval process report

Keele University, Occupational Therapy, 2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve occupational therapy programmes at Keele University. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) 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(s) against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme(s) should be approved
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme(s) are approved

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

Previous consideration	Not applicable. The approval process was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • whether the programme(s) is / are approved.
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review is in the 2028-29 academic year

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(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / ongoing approval.

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:
- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

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

The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:
- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)

- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

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

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

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view on our website.

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Julie-Anne Lowe	Lead visitor, Occupational Therapist
Patricia McClure	Lead visitor, Occupational Therapist
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 11 HCPC-approved programmes across six professions. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1996. This includes one post-registration programme for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotation.

The education provider has engaged with the approval review process in the current model of quality assurance. The education provider sought approval for the following new programmes:

- MSc Occupational Therapy, FT (Full time) programme
- BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging), FLX (Flexible) programme
- MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics, FT (Full time) programme

We were satisfied there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate our standards were met, and the programmes were approved by the respective Education and Training Committee in:

- November 2023
- August 2022
- December 2021

The education provider engaged with the annual monitoring assessment process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2019. Annual monitoring was for each profession, and at the meeting on 1 July 2020 the Education and Training Committee agreed that there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the programmes remain approved.

The proposed programmes sit within the School of Allied Health Professions in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Other HCPC-approved programmes also sit within this faculty.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2009
	Occupational therapy	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2024
	Paramedic	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2021
	Physiotherapist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2019
	Prosthetist / Orthotist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2022
	Radiographer	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2017

	Speech and language therapy	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2024
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2010

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	450	510	2024	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.

We assessed whether the education provider has the resources in place for the proposed programmes and were satisfied with the information provided. |
| Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing | 3% | 2% | 2020-21 | 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 below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above 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 the education provider is performing above sector norms.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	92%	2020-21	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 5%. We reviewed learner's experience on programmes and potential for progression and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.

Learner positivity score	76.3%	80.0%	2023	This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 5.5%. We reviewed the learner experience at the education provider and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
HCPC performance review cycle length	n/a	2028/29	2023/24	The provider should next engage with monitoring in five years, the 2028/29 academic year. This decision was made in 2023/24.

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 about both programmes is provided on the education provider's website. This contains a breakdown of the entry requirements for all programmes including details of the academic

grade requirements, criminal records declaration, health check requirements, and the requirement to attend an interview.
- o The apprenticeship programme provides information about the programme and its components, eligibility, support for learners, funding and how to apply.
- o The marketing and programme teams review the contents of programme information pages on the education provider's website.
- o Applicants are provided with admissions information during open day talks. Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant school should they need further information about the programmes.
- o Programme Specifications are available for all programmes. These provide full information about programmes for a specific year of entry and include information such as fees and additional costs.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - o The English language entry requirements are detailed in programme specifications and on programme webpages. Applicants whose first language is not English, must have the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) of 7.0 with no element below 6.5.
  - o Applicants must have studied within the last five years. They must also have grade 4 / C in GCSE Maths or Level 2 Functional Skills Maths, and grade 4 / C in GCSE English Language.
  - o Applicants' English language skills are assessed as part of the interview process.
  - o All applicants are required to declare any criminal convictions. Applicants need to provide an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. For professional programmes, a Health and Conduct Applicant panel is convened to consider convictions. The panel will include practice-based learning provider representation.
  - o Information about the requirement for occupational health clearance is contained on the webpages and the programme specification.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - o Many programmes do not allow APEL. Where APEL is allowed, applications are considered on a case-by-case basis by the relevant programme director to assess the suitability of the prior learning. It will be permitted on the proposed programmes.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider is committed to ensuring equality of treatment of staff, learners, and applicants.
  - o Staff involved in interviewing are required to do EDI training. Interviewers are responsible for ensuring equal opportunities are maintained. This includes seeking further support from Student Support if required and making reasonable adjustments where necessary.
  - o Interviews are undertaken by a minimum of two people. This minimises the potential for bias from one individual.
  - o The education provider is a member of the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and a Disability Confident Employer. They are committed to equality across staff and learner bodies.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]** –
  - o Academic standards conform to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) levels and subject benchmark statements where applicable. Programmes are validated through Standing Validation Panels (SVPs). These confirm modules and programmes are at the correct level to achieve the award.
  - o All HCPC-regulated programmes are approved by SVPs at or above the expected threshold level of entry to the Register. Annual programme reviews take place and external examiners comment on benchmark statements where applicable.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision** –
  - o Each school holds a budget which is reviewed regularly, along with cashflow, by the Faculty Management Accountant.

---

[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 Modules and programmes are reviewed regularly using quality assurance processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
  - o Agreements exist with practice-based learning providers showing joint commitment to the training of learners.
  - o Stakeholders are consulted during the revalidation processes to ensure programmes meet the needs of the future workforce for the profession.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o Programme level meetings report into the School Education Committee. This reports to the Faculty Education Committee and then the University Education Committee.
  - o The School Education Committee receives reports from programme boards, undertakes scrutiny of programmes and modules, and approves responses to external examiner reports. It is chaired by the Director of Education.
  - o The Faculty Education Committee has faculty level oversight of and scrutinises new programme development, programme modifications, and learner experience. It is chaired by the Dean of Education.
  - o The University Education Committee is responsible for strategic and policy-related matters about the development and delivery of programmes. It is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education).
  - o All the education provider's regulations provide the framework for programme management. For example, regulation C7 applies to all postgraduate taught programmes. This gives the framework to manage the programme in areas such as admissions, maximum period of registration, student engagement with studies and assessments, determination of results, and action to be taken in the event of failure.
  - o Programme teams are led by a registrant of the relevant profession. Other staff are also registered. For example, the Director of Education is a Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registrant.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o The education provider has a probation procedure for all staff, with points for review. The procedure provides a set time when new staff have more intensive guidance, encouragement, and appropriate early training.
  - o Staff Performance Review and Enhancement (SPRE) is mandatory for all staff. The SPRE provides a framework for managers and their staff to work together. This framework clarifies expectations and ensures

they are realistic and relevant to the direction of the education provider and to the career planning of the individual staff.

- o Academic staff can request study leave to support their development. They are also encouraged and supported to become members of the Higher Education Agency (HEA). The Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE) supports staff development by offering expertise in academic development, technology, and employability. Organisational Development offers training and support to all staff.
- o Lecturers are supported by their Programme Director and the governance structures, Directors of Education, Deans of Education and Heads of School.
- o Practice Educators are supported by the education provider and are offered training and updates as required.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The education provider has partnerships with NHS providers to support practice-based learning for the programmes.
  - o Agreements are in place with practice-based learning providers to support learning and the provision of the future workforce for these professions.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality** –
  - o Academic quality is maintained through a cycle of monitoring, review, and evaluation. This includes module evaluation by learners, review of performance on modules, annual programme reviews, and revalidation.
  - o External examiners are appointed for all programmes. They are invited to provide feedback. Programme teams meet to discuss external examiner feedback and how to respond. The education provider responds to this feedback following examination boards. They also meet to discuss any proposed changes to modules based on all feedback.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
  - o The faculty has a newly constituted Placements and Quality Management Committee with representation from all schools in the faculty, the Placements team, and the Quality team. We will need to consider the Committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
  - o The School of Allied Health Professions has a practice-based learning team who carry out quality assurance checks on all practice education providers. They provide training for new practice educators and refresher training for longstanding educators. A staff member meets with learners and their clinical educator for each practice-based learning. During link tutor visits and practice-based learning debriefs, learners are asked about any safeguarding issues, serious incidents, discrimination, and whistleblowing situations. These are documented in the link tutor visit form and practice-based learning debrief form.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement** –
  - o Learner representatives are chosen by the cohort. These attend Student Staff Voice Committee (SSVC) meetings to give the views of their cohort. SSVC feedback comes to programme meetings and on to School Education Committee and School and Faculty SSVC as appropriate.
  - o Learner feedback is used to inform any changes to modules and programmes. Learner feedback is requested when programmes are going through revalidation or new programmes are being developed.
  - o The Students' Union has representation on University Committees.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policy regarding service user and carer involvement. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at service user and carer involvement at programme level.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The faculty has a newly constituted Placements and Quality Management Committee with representation from all schools in the faculty, the Placements team, and the Quality team. As this is new, we will need to consider the committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policies regarding service user and carer involvement. As it is not set at the institution level, we will review service user and carer involvement at the programme level through Stage 2.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
  - University Regulation B covers all learners' rights and responsibilities. It states learners can access support when they have an issue which is affecting their ability to submit work.
  - The education provider provides institutional support through a dedicated Apprenticeship Team for all apprenticeship learners.
  - The Support to Study Policy applies where learners need additional support to continue their studies. The first stage involves a meeting with the Student Experience and Support Officer, the learner, and a member of academic staff. A plan is put into place to help the learner move forward with their studies.
  - There is an Academic Mentoring code of practice. Learners are allocated an academic mentor who signpost support services. If a learner requires reasonable adjustments, they can contact Student Services.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
  - Learners complete a declaration annually relating to their health and suitability for the programme.
  - If there is a concern around a learner's health and / or conduct, they will be referred to the school's Health and Conduct Committee.
  - Learners are required to inform the education provider if there are any changes to their DBS clearance.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –

- o The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences has an interprofessional education sub-committee. They meet regularly and report to the Faculty Education Committee annually.
  - o The Keele University Interprofessional Education programme is designed to enable interprofessional learning throughout the curriculum. This programme includes a range of learners from professions such as biomedical science, child nursing, mental health nursing, medicine, physiotherapy, and diagnostic radiography.
  - o From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policies regarding interprofessional education. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at interprofessional education at programme level.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider is committed to ensuring equality of treatment of staff, learners, and applicants. They are a member of the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan, Stonewall Diversity Champion and is a Disability Confident Employer.
  - o The School of Allied Health Professions was awarded an Athena Swan departmental silver award in July 2023 in recognition of its work in gender equality. The school is a member of the Midlands Racial Equality in Medicine network. They are a signatory to the British Medical Association (BMA) charter against racial harassment, BMA pledge to end sexual harassment, and the UK Medical School's Charter on So-Called LGBTQ+ Conversion Therapy. The school has introduced bullying and harassment reporting for staff and learners and is rolling out microaggression training for all staff.
  - o Learners are sent a 'Say my name' form to highlight their pronouns, and name pronunciation. Assessment dates are reviewed annually to consider the impact of dates upon religious holidays.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider has informed us of the interprofessional education sub-committee in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Also, the Interprofessional Education programme is designed to enable interprofessional learning throughout the curriculum. From the information the education provider provided, they also run profession specific policies regarding interprofessional education. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at interprofessional education at programme level through Stage 2.

<u>Assessment</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** – Explore findings related to this area, including
  - Assessments are designed to ensure they test learning outcomes. They are reviewed as part of module approval and revisions.
  - There are exemptions from anonymous marking where it is not possible, for example for presentations. Where this is the case, the exemption is written into the module specification.
  - External Examiner reports are received after each board. Responses are drafted and approved at School Education Committee. These include how programme teams plan to respond to any recommendations made by External Examiners.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - The explanation of protected titles and exit awards for learners who do not achieve the requirements for that award are stated in the programme specifications.
  - Professional programmes attendance requirements are more stringent than for non-regulated programmes. These requirements are stated in programme handbooks and are communicated to learners.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals** –
  - All learners have the same right to appeal. They may only appeal based on exceptional circumstances not known at the time or procedural irregularity.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

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

There are three areas we will need to review through stage 2 of the process:

- The faculty has a newly constituted Placements and Quality Management Committee with representation from all schools in the faculty, the Placements team, and the Quality team. As this is new, we will need to consider the committee and practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments, as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policies regarding service user and carer involvement. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at service user and carer involvement at programme level.
- The education provider has informed us of the interprofessional education sub-committee in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Also, the Interprofessional Education programme is designed to enable interprofessional learning throughout the curriculum. From the information the education provider provided, they also run profession specific policies regarding interprofessional education. We will need to be assured how the programmes prepare learners to work with other professionals and across professions for the benefit of service users and carers.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:
- The programme team are led by an experienced occupational therapy academic. There are two further full-time members of the programme staff, who are also experienced academics. All programme staff are HCPC-registered. The team are supported by sessional lecturers, including partners from practice and users of services, and other HCPC-registered allied health professionals within the school and faculty. The business cases have provision for further staff as the programmes develop and learner numbers increase. The staff-student ratio will be maintained at 1:15 / 20 learners as per Royal College of Occupational Therapists recommendations. The programmes are supported by the Director of Education, who has oversight of all education programmes within the School of Allied Health Professions, and the Director for Undergraduate Programmes. Professional service staff offer administrative support to the programmes. The programmes are also supported by a PSRB and Quality Officer.
- Learners have access to two onsite simulation properties. These have wi-fi, audio and a visual connection for live streaming into viewing rooms and lecture theatres. There is also an anatomy training centre and clinical education centre. There are simulation facilities which include a hospital ward and an emergency department resuscitation room, based at the Royal Stoke University Hospital of North Staffordshire. The education provider will have simulation facilities and resources once the refurbishment of the Darwin building is complete in September 2024. Small cohort sizes will facilitate the integration of practical skill development, alongside learning within specifically designed learning environments.

- There are on-site teaching and library facilities and learner services. The Keele Virtual Learning Environment (KLE) provides easy access to programme and module resources including lecture notes, presentations, and discussion boards.
- The teaching resources and support mechanisms are or will be in place by September 2024 in preparation for the proposed start dates for both programmes in September 2025.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist	30 learners per cohort, one cohort per year	01/09/2025
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational therapist	30 learners per cohort, one cohort per year	01/09/2025

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

Data / intelligence considered

We also considered intelligence from others (eg prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:
- NHS England (Midlands) – we received information considering current pressures regarding practice-based learning for physiotherapy in the Midlands. The information was reviewed but we considered it would not impact on this assessment.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

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

Quality theme 1 – how the education provider will address the regional impacts on the availability of practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the education provider's business case highlighted practice-based learning availability and capacity as a potential risk due to 'the increasing number of occupational therapy programmes locally'. In addition, the visitors noted some practice-based learning providers indicated there have been a number of unused practice-based learning in recent years. The visitors considered these factors could have an impact on practice-based learning availability, due to competition between education providers in sourcing sufficient practice-based learning for the various programmes. The visitors therefore considered there was a possibility of there being insufficient practice-based learning opportunities available for the proposed programmes.

The visitors sought more information about how the education provider will mitigate against a possible impact caused by the practice-based learning requirements across the years of the programmes, and across other programmes in the region. They also sought more information about how the education provider will mitigate against putting pressure on practice-based learning providers.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider stated they have predicted expected growth in practice-based learning until 2029 / 30. At this point, all their programmes would have reached cohort capacity. The education provider added local practice-based learning providers were committed to supporting the development of the programmes and practice-based learning opportunities. Stakeholders identified within meetings that some practice-based learning had not been used by other education providers. The education provider informed us they were therefore using unused capacity within the local system.

The education provider informed us local employers were committed to providing practice-based learning for those studying via the apprenticeship route. They anticipated learners would be employed locally and across a wide variety of practice-based learning settings. This would enable practice-based learning arrangements not to impact upon practice-based learning offers for the direct entry occupational therapy programmes. They added they had also sought practice-based learning offers. They considered there would be sufficient capacity for the proposed cohort sizes and any expected growth. Practice-based learning offered so far demonstrate a range of opportunities for learners including within social care, primary care, mental and physical health, acute hospitals and community settings.

The education provider had also established new practice-based learning areas who were committed to providing practice-based learning for their learners. For example, the Cheshire Primary Care Network. The development of practice-based learning within the private, independent and voluntary and research and leadership sectors would continue. The visitors were informed the education provider would continue to work with practice-based learning providers. Strategies for developing innovation in practice-based learning included providing long arm supervision in non-traditional settings.

The education provider planned to meet with other local education providers to discuss challenges such as practice-based learning capacity. Some local practice-based learning providers operated a fair share model of offers. They would also, where appropriate, share any unused capacity within the local system.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how the education provider would address practice-based learning availability and capacity if it became an issue. The visitors were also satisfied how the education provider would mitigate against both a possible impact caused by scheduling practice-based learning and putting pressure on practice-based learning providers. They had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.

Quality theme 2 – service users and carer involvement

Area for further exploration: As identified within Stage 1, the policies around the involvement of service users and carers was set at a profession / programme level. Consideration of these policies / processes were therefore referred to Stage 2. The visitors noted there was limited service user and carer involvement in the proposed programmes. For example, they noted the education provider had highlighted modules with service user input and provided a list of some service users involved. The education provider informed the visitors that expert patients and volunteers were regularly recruited and invited to support teaching within sessions. They added the proposed programmes would seek the support of those who accessed occupational therapy services. However, the visitors were unsure about the planned service user and carer involvement and strategy across the proposed programmes. They therefore sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us service users and carers had been involved in the development of the proposed programmes. They said they planned service user involvement within the new programmes to reflect the existing practices within the currently approved occupational therapy programme. Service users and carers were therefore involved in multiple areas. For example, they taught about their lived experiences in five sessions within one module in the first semester. The Faculty User and Carer Liaison Group (FUCLG) aimed to maximise service user and carer involvement in research and education. Their aim is to streamline service user and carer involvement into a faculty-wide process. They would do this by establishing a 'hub' of service user and carers who would sign-up to the faculty-wide process. Individual programmes would then advertise opportunities to those signed up. They plan to introduce this over the next two years. Until then, we will consider service user and carer involvement on a profession / programme level.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how service users and carers are involved in the programmes. They had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.

<u>Quality theme 3 – the programmes' proposals for future staffing and the use of visiting lecturers</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted there are currently three full time equivalent (FTE) occupational therapy lecturers who would teach on the proposed programmes. All had previous experience of teaching occupational therapy programmes, and curriculum development and design. The education provider informed us they were recruiting an additional member of staff to be employed on a fixed term contract. The visitors were informed administrative staff supported practice-based learning and programme management aspects of the programmes. The visitors considered all these posts were sufficient to support the proposed programmes for the first year. However, the visitors were unsure about the education provider's plans for future staffing requirements as the programmes grew and reached capacity of anticipated numbers. They also noted the business case did not appear to indicate proposed staff numbers, nor provide information of the staffing strategy.

The SETs mapping document stated that "Recognising the limitations of current staff expertise, the programme team have sought support for specialist teaching". The education provider provided details of professional experts who were available to contribute to sessional teaching. However, the visitors were unsure of the level and extent of the inclusion of visiting lecturers on the proposed programmes.

The visitors sought more information about these areas.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us of the staffing strategy for the new programmes. The visitors noted the proposed staffing for both programmes until 2029 / 30, which included details such as the total academic staff FTE and new staffing requirements. The education provider informed us they had appointed a further occupational therapy staff member. They added this had expanded the expertise and specialist knowledge within the team. The new member of staff had clinical experience in a range of mental health settings and a postgraduate certificate in sensory integration. The visitors understood visiting lecturers had provided support and continue to provide support related to a variety of areas. For example, learning disability services, social care, sensory integration therapy, and wheelchair services. The education provider stated all occupational therapy teaching staff would teach across all occupational therapy programmes. Occupational therapy teaching staff supported interprofessional modules and this would continue in the proposed programmes. Staff from other allied health professions, for example, physiotherapy, would also support the interprofessional modules.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence demonstrated the staffing strategy demonstrates an effective strategy. They were also satisfied with the level and extent of the inclusion of visiting lecturers on the proposed programmes. They had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.

Section 4: Findings

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

Conditions

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

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

Overall findings on how standards are met

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

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - Applicants for the apprenticeship programme must be employed in a role related to occupational therapy and be sponsored by their employer. Applications are made through their employer. Selection will take place through an application, shortlisting and interview process led by the employer. The education provider considers applications and has the final decision whether to accept the applicant onto the programme. Applicants need to demonstrate satisfactory occupational health clearance, good character, and a satisfactory enhanced DBS as part of the application process with the employing organisation.
  - For the direct entry programme, selection and entry criteria are outlined in policy documentation and programme specific documents. National and international applicants from diverse backgrounds are welcomed. All applicants need to provide:
    - a personal statement demonstrating professional suitability, motivation and an understanding of occupational therapy; and
    - a satisfactory reference from a previous employer, education institution or person of standing, confirming the applicants' good character and academic abilities.
  - The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - The education provider has involved local practice-based learning partners and employers of occupational therapists since the inception of the programmes through stakeholder meetings. Local employers have identified staff to study the proposed degree apprenticeship programme in the academic year 2025-2026. The education provider had received interest from organisations such as Stoke on Trent City Social Care.
  - Regular Stakeholder Quality and Development meetings are held with practice-based learning partners. The education provider also meets with practice-based learning partners specifically about the occupational therapy provision.
  - There are regular stakeholder meetings with local organisations and representatives of stakeholders such as the integrated care system

(ICS). This is to monitor local workforce requirements and provide updates. For example, sharing recruitment data.

- Specifically for the apprenticeship programme, the programme team and local employers meet regularly to collaborate, agree, and manage expectations across both organisations.

- Practice-based learning capacity has been mapped across all occupational therapy programmes. The education provider has discussed and agreed the positioning and configuration of practice-based learning with local employers and education providers. The education provider has a practice-based learning team. Within the occupational therapy team, there is a specific member who leads on practice-based learning. The teams are responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating occupational therapy practice-based learning. The education provider meets regularly with other local education providers who provide occupational therapy education to consider practice-based learning.

- As discussed in quality theme 1, the education provider has different mechanisms for dealing with issues of availability and capacity. For example, they had established new practice-based learning areas who are committed to providing practice-based learning for their learners. The development of practice-based learning within the private, independent and voluntary and research and leadership sectors will continue as cohorts increase. A variety of practice-based learning models are used. For example, long arm supervision.

- As discussed in quality theme 2, service users and carers are involved in a variety of areas on the proposed programmes. For instance, their views have been sought in programme development and integrated into the content and design of the programmes. The FUCLG aims to maximise service user and carer involvement by establishing a hub of service user and carers.

- The programme team consists of three FTE lecturers. They all have experience of teaching, and curriculum development. They are supported by staff from the wider school. Administrative staff support the programmes. The education provider has a dedicated Apprenticeship Team. All staff engage in mandatory training and continuous professional development (CPD). As discussed in quality theme 3, the education provider has mapped the proposed staffing for both programmes until 2029 / 30. Visiting lecturers provide support in a variety of areas.

- All lecturers are qualified and HCPC-registered occupational therapists, with experience of working within the NHS and other areas. They are all engaged in research or scholarship activities and have experience of leadership. Staff gain wider awareness through engagement in a range of activities. For example, attending conferences.

- Programme resources include a simulation building, a health house and bungalow. The programmes are supported by library and online resources, including access to journals such as the American Journal

of Occupational Therapy. The education provider has a dedicated occupational therapy budget which has enabled the purchase of specific resources to meet the needs of learners and educators. Student Services provide support services for learners.

- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
    - o Learning outcomes have been mapped to ensures graduates meet the standards of proficiency. The module descriptors show the learning outcomes attached to modules.
    - o Learning outcomes are aligned with professional conduct expectations including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Learners are taught about professional conduct throughout the programmes. Apprenticeship learners also are reminded of them during tripartite meetings between the learner, employer and education provider.
    - o Learning outcomes and programme documentation demonstrate the programmes are focussed on occupational therapy. Learners on the programmes engage in modules of shared teaching. There are opportunities within all modules to apply the teaching specifically to occupational therapy.
    - o The programmes can respond to changes and innovations in practice. The education provider's quality assurance and monitoring processes enable programme teams to review and enhance the curriculum. External mechanisms, such as external examiner reports, support these processes. Learners will develop their knowledge about health and wellbeing needs in local, national and international contexts.
    - o The World Federation of Occupational Therapists' five guiding principles of sustainability are embedded throughout the programmes and are specifically explored within module Addressing the Health and Occupational Needs of Communities and Populations. Public health and primary care are integrated within case studies.
    - o The programmes' structure allows learners to develop knowledge before their first practice-based learning, and then apply this knowledge in practice. Learners then return to academic studies, and consolidate and apply their practice-based learning within their studies. Learners on the apprenticeship programme will be able to apply learning to their workplace roles.
    - o The programmes use a range of teaching and learning methods. For example, seminars and peer teaching. The programmes have been designed to meet the requirements of the Office for Students, to be consistent with the expectations of good practice as outlined by the UK Quality Code and reflect the education provider's Curriculum Design Framework, Learning and Teaching Strategy and Learning Principles. Learners engage in induction activities.
    - o Learners develop autonomous and reflective thinking throughout their programmes. Learners develop skills within the academic setting and apply them in practice-based learning. Apprenticeship learners also

apply these within their workplace. The ability to reflect, think critically and make decisions is assessed both academically and in practice. Apprenticeship learners are also assessed within work-based learning. Apprenticeship learners will also be encouraged to reflect on professional and personal development through tri-partite meetings.

- o Evidence-based practice and research are embedded throughout the programmes. For example, module Applying Theory to Occupational Performance and Participation will introduce learners to evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.
- o Learners undertake IPE through shared teaching and collaborative learning between both proposed programmes and other allied health professions (AHP) learners. For example, module Anatomy, Psychology and Occupational Performance and Participation. Learners on the proposed programmes will take part in four IPE events. For example, first year learners undertake a half day interactive event. Attendance is monitored in the form of a register. The professions involved in these IPE events include occupational therapy and nursing. The faculty has an IPE Sub-Committee who are responsible for facilitation, promotion, and development of IPE.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o Practice based learning is central to the proposed programmes. The education provider has structured it to enable learners to gain knowledge and apply it into future academic modules, and for apprenticeship learners, their workplaces.
  - o There are four periods of practice-based learning within the programmes. The duration of these are six weeks, eight weeks, six weeks and ten weeks respectively. Learners have a range of practice-based learning, including in the NHS, social care, and private, independent and voluntary (PIVO) sectors.
  - o Practice-based learning is audited and regularly reaudited. It is approved by a member of the education provider's Practice Experience team. They ensure a Standard Placement Agreement has been signed by the practice partner organisation and the education provider. The recently instigated (as referred from Stage 1) Placements Management and Quality committee is responsible for managing and enhancing practice-based learning for learners and for effective quality assurance.
  - o Learners feedback about practice-based learning in various ways. For example, debriefing and Placement meetings and by speaking with the Link Tutor. The roles and responsibilities of the education provider, practice-based learning provider and learner are outlined in the Practice Based Learning Handbook. Learners are supported during practice-based learning by a link tutor. The education provider supports the learner and practice educator and monitors the quality of the practice-based learning through a midway meeting. Any issues are

identified, and the Link Tutor or practice-based learning team will support the learner and practice educator to plan and set goals.

- o The Practice Based Learning lead tutor has developed and implemented practice-based learning and are responsible for monitoring and evaluating it. They are supported by a practice-based learning team and an administrative team. The education provider has calculated practice-based learning capacity for the next seven years, until they consider all cohort numbers for the occupational therapy provision will be steady. The education provider has gained support and commitment from local providers.
- o All practice educators are qualified occupational therapists. The education provider will provide initial practice educator training and updates. Practice educators will undertake training regarding the programmes and the specific processes and principles of supervision and assessment. Expectations about supervision are outlined within the Practice Based Learning Handbook. The education provider offers a range of CPD opportunities for practice educators. This includes long arm supervisor and mentor training.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o The assessment strategy evidences the education provider's reasoning for assessment methods. For example, the module Anatomy, Psychology and Occupational Performance and Participation is assessed through a 120-minute examination. The education provider explained the assessment allows the learner to demonstrate the 'application of relevant knowledge through an activity analysis and the exam conditions ensure integrity of the assessment of these foundational skills'.
  - o Learning outcomes are mapped to the standards of proficiency. The module descriptors outline the methods of assessment. For example, for both proposed programmes, learning outcome four on module Applying Theory to Occupational Performance and Participation is 'apply a variety of occupational therapy models which underpin contemporary occupational therapy practice'. This learning outcome is assessed by a 15-minute narrated poster presentation.
  - o Learners are assessed on ethical and professional conduct within practice-based learning. Learners are introduced to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics requirements of the programme throughout each programme.
  - o The assessment methods used within the programmes use a range of techniques and technologies. For example, direct observation during practice-based learning.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standards 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 programmes should be approved.

Education and Training Committee decision

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

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that the programmes are approved

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that the programme should receive approval.

Appendix 1 – summary report

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

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
Keele University	CAS-01523-F6T6Z2	Julie-Anne Lowe Patricia McClure	Through this assessment, we have noted: The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.	Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities: The programme team are led by an experienced occupational therapy academic. There are two further full-time members of the programme staff, who are also experienced academics. All programme staff are HCPC-registered. The team are supported by sessional lecturers, including partners from practice and users of services, and other HCPC-registered allied health professionals within the school and faculty. The business cases have provision for further staff as the programmes develop and learner numbers increase. The staff-student ratio will be maintained at 1:15 / 20 learners as per Royal

| | | | | College of Occupational Therapists recommendations. The programmes are supported by the Director of Education, who has oversight of all education programmes within the School of Allied Health Professions, and the Director for Undergraduate Programmes. Professional service staff offer administrative support to the programmes. The programmes are also supported by a PSRB and Quality Officer.

Learners have access to two onsite simulation properties. These have wi-fi, audio and a visual connection for live streaming into viewing rooms and lecture theatres. There is also an anatomy training centre and clinical education centre. There are simulation facilities which include a hospital ward and an emergency department resuscitation room, based at the Royal Stoke University Hospital of North Staffordshire. The education provider will have simulation facilities and resources once the refurbishment of the Darwin building is complete in September |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | 2024. Facilities and resources will provide opportunities for learners to engage in IPE and simulation activities with other health professional learners across the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Small cohort sizes will facilitate the integration of practical skill development, alongside learning within specifically designed learning environments. There are on-site teaching and library facilities and learner services. The Keele Virtual Learning Environment (KLE) provides easy access to programme and module resources including lecture notes, presentations, and discussion boards.

The teaching resources and support mechanisms are or will be in place by September 2024 in preparation for the proposed start dates for both programmes in September 2025. |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Programmes		
Programme name	**Mode of study**	**Nature of provision**
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Taught (HEI)
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	WBL (Work based learning)	Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2009
MSc Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			20/01/2024
MSci Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2021
MSc Physiotherapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2020
MSci Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2019
MSci Physiotherapy (with International year)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2019
MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics	FT (Full time)	Prosthetist / orthotist			01/01/2022
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)	FLX (Flexible)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		26/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2017
MSci Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			23/09/2024
Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014