Approval process report

AECC University College, Dietetics, 2023-2024

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve MSc Dietetics (Integrated Degree Apprenticeship) programme at AECC University College. 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 [institution / programme(s)] should be approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved. [post-Panel, if observations] The education provider's observations were considered in making this decision.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval process was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide whether the programme(s) is approved.
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The education provider is currently going through their performance review, and we are in the report writing stage. • The education provider is currently engaged in two active approval cases. They are for: ○ MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) ○ Independent and Supplementary Prescribing (part time)

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:

Duane Mellor	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Helen White	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Louise Winterburn	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers seven HCPC-approved programmes across six professions. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2020.

The education provider engaged with the approval review process in the current model of quality assurance in 2021. They were introducing the MSc Occupational Therapy; MSc Speech and Language Therapy; MSc Dietetics, and MSc Podiatry programmes. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards were met, and that the programmes were approved by the Education and Training Committee in 2022.

The education provider engaged with the approval review process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2020. They were introducing the BSc (Hons) Radiography (Radiotherapy and Oncology), and BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging) full time programmes. This review involved consideration of documentary evidence and a virtual approval visit, to consider whether the programmes meet our standards for the first time. After considering the education provider's response to the conditions set, we were satisfied that the conditions were met, and the programme was approved in 2020.

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	Chiropodist / podiatrist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2023
	Dietitian	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2023
	Occupational therapy	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2023
	Physiotherapist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2021
	Radiographer	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2020
	Speech and language therapist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2023

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	180	200	2023	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision. The value number shows an increase in their total learner numbers, potentially due to the new programme.
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 3%

				We did not explore this data point through this assessment because no impact on SETs were considered and the education provider is currently engaging with performance review where this will be picked up.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	100%	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 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 been maintained. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because it showed the education provider is performing well in this area and no impact on the SETs was considered.
Learner positivity score	75.2%	66.8%	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 below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.

				We explored this data point through email clarification although no impact on SETs were considered.
HCPC performance review cycle length				The education provider is currently engaging in performance review for the period 2018-2023.

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.

<u>Admissions</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Information for applicants** –
  - The education provider has explained how all programmes have a course-specific downloadable document on the course website. This document outlines the specific information learners need for the course.
  - The education provider stated their Recruitment, Selection, and Admission Regulations and Policy are set at the institution level and will apply to all programs. This policy contains information on Admissions principles and the Application process, information for applicants on deferred entry, and applicants requiring a visa to study in the UK.
  - Apprentices will be jointly recruited between the employer and the provider.
  - The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - The education provider has stated that specific information for programmes will be in the 'Admissions regulations and entry requirements' section of the course specification document.
  - The 'Recruitment, Selection and Admission Regulations' and the 'Recruitment, Selection and Admission Policy and Procedure: Taught Courses' documents contain information on; English language

proficiency. They also contain information on English language details which are on individual course pages. The policy includes information for applicants with disabilities and additional support needs. Admissions are subject to the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate or National Police Certificate for those living outside of the UK.
  - o Each programme webpage and applicant information pack contain information for applicants on the health requirements of learners, including vaccination and occupational health assessments.
  - o Overseas applicants will require the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with an overall score of 7.0 with no less than 6.5 in each component or equivalent. Level 2 English and Maths is a requirement for apprenticeships. The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)**
  - o Information on this area is outlined in the education provider's 'Recruitment, Selection and Admission Policy' document. For apprenticeships, the education provider's policies align with the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) requirements for assessing, recognizing, and recording apprentices' prior learning and experience. All applicants undergo a thorough initial assessment process.
  - o This policy is set at the institution level and will apply to all programmes.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
  - o The education provider has referred to their 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy' in support of this area. This policy is set at institutional level and will apply to all programmes.
  - o The education provider have an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy which explains how they are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture which offers equality and opportunity for all. This is achieved by eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting respectful relations on campus.
  - o The education provider also refers to their 'Criminal Convictions Procedure' policy which aims to promote a duty of care to ensure the safety of all of its stakeholders. All applicants who present a criminal conviction will be carefully assessed against any potential risk to the provider's staff and learners.
  - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]**
    - o The education provider has a number of policies which they reference in support of this area. The 'Course Design Framework' policy includes information on how the education provider ensures that programmes are delivered at the appropriate level.
    - o The education provider has stated in the approval request form (ARF) their 'Management and Academic Governance' and their 'Course and Unit Monitoring Policy' contains information on how approved course and unit specifications are set and the appropriate FHEQ level identified. This is explored as part of course approval/review.
    - o They explain how the education provider delivers a HCPC approved Level 7 Dietetic programme which forms the rationale for the new proposal and programme development. The delivery of this programme is monitored through policies and processes already in existence. The education provider has had full taught degree awarding powers since 2017 and they have a wide range of HCPC accredited provision at Level 7.
    - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Sustainability of provision**
    - o The education provider has referred to their 'Business Continuity Management (BCM) Policy' in the ARF. They state that apprentices will be taught by AECC University College academic staff and qualified professional practitioners with relevant expertise. The staff base is supported by a visiting faculty approach through partnership with local healthcare providers.
    - o The education provider has stated that a business case must be presented to the University College's Senior Management Group for internal consideration and approval as part of the overall course consideration process. The provider also has a periodic review process to ensure that the curriculum is contemporary, and the programme is fit for purpose and sustainable.
    - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective programme delivery**
    - o The education provider uses their 'Course and Unit Monitoring Policy' to support effective programme delivery. All programmes have steering groups who meet regularly to discuss, develop and deliver the programme action plan. There is also an annual monitoring and reporting process for individual programmes.
    - o Each programme sits within a specific academic School where Course Leaders are line managed by the Head of that School. The Head sits on the Institution's Senior Management Team and reports directly to

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[1] This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

the Board of Governors.. This demonstrates the education providers' institutional management process relating to the running of programmes.

- o Appropriate qualification and experience (being HCPC registered and a member of the relevant professional body) are articulated as essential criteria in the job description for all academic staff appointed to the programme.
- o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Effective staff management and development**
  - o The education provider has a 'People Policy' and 'Staff Development Policy' which sets out their approach to staff management. This contributes to effective management and development of staff.
  - o The education provider explained how staff development includes all policies, practices, and procedures to support and develop the capabilities of staff. This aims improve the quality of their work and to ensure success of the provider. It is an ongoing process, closely linked to their annual appraisal process.
  - o To ensure that learners are taught and guided in their learning by appropriately qualified staff, all non-clinical academic staff are expected to have, or be working towards, a PhD or other doctoral qualification. Clinical staff must have full registration with the relevant PSRB and conform to the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements of the relevant regulator and/or professional body.
  - o New staff without teaching experience are encouraged to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching or equivalent, with support for achieving recognition as a Fellow of Advance HE.
  - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **"Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level**
  - o The 'Course Consideration, Approval and Periodic Review Policy and Procedure' document functions to establish the procedure all new programme proposals must adhere to before being accepted for development and validation. This policy is set at the institution level and will apply to all programmes.
  - o The education provider has an institution wide 'Placement Policy' that outlines the process for the identification, approval, and ongoing monitoring of student practice placements.
  - o The ARF states that placement provider partnerships and agreements are coordinated by the University College Executive Team and signed off by the Vice-Chancellor.
  - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

<u>Quality, monitoring, and evaluation</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality**
  - The education provider has several policies and mechanisms in place to manage and monitor academic quality. These include their 'Course Design Framework' policy and the 'Education Strategy.' Academic quality monitoring is an ongoing process and is key to the continuous enhancement of learners' experiences of their programmes.
  - The baseline document states that all programmes undergo continuous monitoring and Course Leaders complete an annual monitoring report form. The forms are considered through an internal review process and received by Academic Standards and Quality Committee, which is a committee of Academic Board. Annual monitoring leads to the development of a course action plan that is monitored by the relevant Couse Steering Committee throughout the year.
  - All programmes are reviewed every six years. The procedure is the same as for new programmes, but also includes consideration of a range of qualitative and quantitative monitoring data.
  - Changes to programmes between reviews are managed through the institutional 'Course and Unit Modification' policy. To ensure institutional oversight, any changes to programmes approved at programme level are reported to the institutional Academic Standards and Quality Committee.
  - The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments**
  - The education provider uses their 'Placement Policy' to outline the requirements and expectations for course teams involved in the organisation, approval, and ongoing management of placement learning. This ensures a high-quality student learning experience.
  - The education provider has stated in the ARF that for apprenticeships, close relationships with employers will underpin practice and placement arrangements and quality monitoring. This will be supported by regular tri-partite meetings as stated in the apprentice training plan.
  - The education provider's institutional 'Placement Policy' sets out arrangements for learner concerns and whistleblowing, emphasizing its importance, and the need to support learners. At the program level, specific arrangements covering 'whistleblowing,' etc., are included in each Placement Handbook. Guidance on conduct and ethics is embedded in the curriculum, which focuses on expectations regarding reporting concerns. Raising concerns is also covered in the Placement Handbook.
  - The education provider outlines the specific role and responsibilities of the Practice Educator, including their level of experience and

qualification in the Practice Educator Handbook. The provider has also stated that they will run training and continuing professional development (CPD) for Practice Educators to further ensure the required knowledge, skills, and experience are developed in Practice Educators working with learners.

- o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Learner involvement**
  - o The education provider refers to their 'Course and Unit Monitoring Policy' and the 'Student Engagement Policy' to demonstrate learner involvement in the program. Learners at both mid and end points of individual units of study provide feedback on their programs. All course years of study have at least one student representative who sits on the Course Steering Group and the university-wide Student Experience Committee.
  - o The 'Course Design Framework' and 'Course Consideration Policy' include the institutional expectation that learners are involved in the design process for new programs, and this is tested as part of the course consideration/approval process. Groups of learners are invited to meet with the course consideration panel to give feedback on the learning experience.
  - o Student representatives for each program are members of the Course Steering Committee. The remit of the Committee is to maintain the academic standards of the program and to ensure that it operates in accordance with the approved program specification. The Committee also seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities, ensuring that issues requiring improvement are addressed, and good practice shared.
  - o There is learner representation on all committees of the Academic Board and on the Board of Governors. The Student Experience Committee has the specific remit to promote and facilitate a two-way channel of communication between learners and staff. This relates to learner experience and enhancement, support services, and learner engagement in academic governance.
  - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

- **Service user and carer involvement**
  - o The education provider uses their 'Sharing Patient and Community Experience' (SPaCE) Group, along with other groups that contribute to this area, to demonstrate service user and carer involvement. The 'Friends of the Clinic' group of service users provides regular feedback and input into the delivery of services in the AECC University College Clinic. The clinic will provide some placements for learners on HCPC approved courses. This feedback is reported directly to a Clinical Governance Group. In the clinic, the patient voice is also collected through annual questionnaires and comment cards.

- The education provider has stated that by working with service users and carers, they can provide outstanding person-centred care to patients in the local community and deliver first-class education to healthcare learners.
- The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

<u>Learners</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support**
  - The education provider offers a broad range of support services via their onsite Student Services Team. This provision also includes well-being advice and counselling services. Learners are also able to talk to their assigned Personal Tutor regarding pastoral issues, as well as any tutor they feel they can confide in.
  - The institutional 'Placement Policy' sets out overarching arrangements for student concerns and whistleblowing, emphasizing its importance, and the need to support learners.
  - The 'Student Complaints Policy and Procedure' is set at the institutional level and applies to learners on all programs leading to AECC University College awards. The policy considers the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) good practice guidance. Learners are encouraged to raise and resolve complaints informally in the first instance. If this does not address their concerns, there is a three-stage complaints procedure. At the end of the process, learners may take a complaint to the OIA.
  - The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Ongoing suitability**
  - The education provider has referred to several mechanisms as being in place to determine learners' ongoing suitability. This includes the 'Fitness to Study' and the 'Fitness to Practice' (FtP) policies, as well as the 'Student Disciplinary Policy.' Any concerns relating to the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character, and health will be addressed institutionally through these policies.
  - The education provider has an established Student Monitoring and Wellbeing Group that meets regularly for each programme. They consider matters related to individual learner progress, including academic performance, skills attainment, attendance requirements, and well-being issues. This group considers and helps to identify learners who perform below the required standard or are in danger of doing so, makes recommendations, and monitors outcomes.

- o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)**
    - o The education provider has a specific guidance document for learners within the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, providing information on interprofessional education and learning. This involves shared learning with other relevant healthcare profession-focused programs, as well as in-placement learning.
    - o Placement Handbooks and unit descriptors are utilized to introduce learners to concepts of interprofessional learning and interprofessional practice at the start of all programs. There is joint delivery of units across health profession-focused programs to foster interprofessional education, and interprofessional learning forms a core part of the placement experiences of learners.
    - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
    - o The education provider has stated that they are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture that offers equality and opportunity for all by eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and promoting respectful relations on campus. This commitment is evidenced through their 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Policy.
    - o The education provider utilises its Changing the Culture working group, a joint University College/Students' Union group, to collaborate on bringing about cultural change and undertaking activities to promote an inclusive culture. This includes initiatives related to Black Lives Matter, disability, LGBTQ+, mental health, and well-being.
    - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

<u>Assessment</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity**
    - o To ensure objectivity in assessments, the provider has existing policies, procedures, and regulations in place, including the 'Course Design Framework' policy, 'Assessment Criteria' policy, and 'Academic Misconduct' policy. The education provider asserts that all assessments align with these policies, as well as with the 'Assessment Regulations' and the 'Marking and Moderation Policy,' which are institutional-wide policies.
    - o The institutional 'Setting and Scrutiny of Assessments Policy and Procedure,' referenced in the baseline document, guides the scrutiny of

assessments to ensure validity, reliability, and accurate assessment documentation. Implementation occurs at the School level, where all assessments have clear criteria objectively mapped to institutional generic assessment criteria.
- o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Progression and achievement**
    - o The education provider has confirmed that assessment regulations operate institutionally, outlining requirements for progression and awards. If necessary, specific regulations for individual programs are approved separately. Learner progress aligns with Assessment Regulations and the Marking and Moderation policy.
    - o Course Specifications and the University College Student Handbook direct students to approved assessment regulations for details on progression and achievement.
    - o The Course Handbook will convey information on programs with specific minimum attendance requirements. Failing to meet these requirements will impact the learner's ability to pass the unit and proceed with their studies.
    - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Appeals**
    - o The education provider has stated that appeals across the institution are managed in accordance with the referenced policies, which include the 'Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures (Taught Awards),' 'Disciplinary Policy,' and 'Employer and Apprentice Complaints Policy (Apprenticeships).' This process is already in place and in use for their existing provision.
    - o Appeals follow a two-stage process: stage 1 involves an informal discussion, and stage 2 includes a panel review. At the end of this process, learners may escalate a complaint to the OIA.
    - o The policies are institution-wide and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Outcomes from stage 1

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

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

- Staffing and physical resources are already in place. However, the education provider plans to recruit a new programme lead and a pharmacist to support the delivery of the new programme.
- The education provider has a wide range of physical spaces including, seminar rooms, clinical rooms, specialist simulation spaces and learner focused areas.
- The library has been adapted into a high-tech learning facility complete with over 10,000 books, online journals, medical databases, anatomical and other learning and academic software.

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
MSc Dietetics (Integrated Degree apprenticeship)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian	20 learners, 1 cohort	23/09/2024

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

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

<u>Quality theme 1 – Ensuring adequate numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver the programme</u>

Area for further exploration: The documentation reviewed by visitors stated the education provider's plans to offer all staff involved in apprenticeships a training plan. This included training on apprenticeship delivery, teaching on an apprenticeship, progress reviews, quality requirements, and end-point assessment. They also stated a new apprenticeship administrator would be appointed to address the administrative burden associated with the new delivery of the new programme. Further information was requested regarding potential additional staffing/number of additional hours that will be required to deliver the new programme. The visitors wanted to understand whether additional posts had been planned and how academic work loading is considered. The education provider had not sufficiently explained whether all staff involved in the delivery of the new programme have or would be required to have a teaching qualification. It is important for the education provider to demonstrate how they had effectively planned for the recruitment of appropriately qualified staff to deliver this programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this area through further documentary evidence. We considered this the most effective way to address the visitors' concerns. We requested evidence such as staff CVs and workload allocation models/staffing resource planning.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that a new programme leader in Dietetics would be recruited for the start of the programme. There will also be an additional full-time lecturer who will join the wider dietetics team across both the MSc pre-registration programme and the dietetics apprenticeship programme. There are also further plans to recruit staff into the second year of the Dietetics programme. The education provider explained how academic workload is calculated utilising the institution wide workload allocation model (WLA). All staff are allocated time depending upon the roles they undertake as part of their employment. This WLA model is used to make the case for additional staffing resources as part of the education provider's annual budgeting process. New and existing staff will either have a teaching qualification, or will be required to complete one, within the first three years of their employment.

The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's response had explained how they will ensure an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver the programme. Therefore, they determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concern and that the standard was met.

<u>Quality theme 2 – approach How practice-based learning is sourced and facilitated.</u>

Area for further exploration: The education provider stated that placement sites for practice-based learning would vary depending on the employer supporting the learner. Employers would have the primary responsibility for providing the appropriate opportunities for their learners to fulfil the practice-based learning components of specific units. It was also acknowledged that not all employers would be able to offer a full range of practice placements and that some swapping of learners between practice placements would be needed. It was not clear how learners might be exchanged to meet the outcomes of the programme where an employing training provider was unable to offer the full range of placement learning opportunities. It was also unclear whether all learners have practice-based learning outside of their own department/area.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this area through further documentary evidence. We considered this the most effective way to address the visitors' concerns. We requested evidence such as documentation which demonstrates how the education provider and practice placement providers have worked together to offer cross area support to each other and/or who will offer specific specialities to ensure the programme has coherence overall.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that all learners will undertake practice-based learning outside their own department. This includes simulated practice-based learning and that undertaken at the institution. They stated that practice-based learning will be approved and managed in accordance with the Placement Learning Policy. Training for those involved in practice-based learning including supervisors and mentors is offered annually. They would host an annual meeting to facilitate the practice-based learning arrangements for each learner each year. Prior to this meeting, an audit of the opportunities than can be offered by each employer would be undertaken and circulated.

The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's response had explained how they will facilitate the practice-based learning arrangements for learners. Therefore, they determined that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concern and that the standard was 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** –
  - The programme documentation clearly articulates the entry and selection criteria of the programme.
  - The admissions requirements are provided on the website so that applicants can make an informed decision about the programme. Entry requirements are also set out within the Course Summary and Resources document.
  - We were satisfied that the entry criteria are appropriate to the level of the programme and will in turn ensure that learners are able to meet our standards for registration once they have successfully completed the programme.
  - Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the relevant standards in this SET area are met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - There is evidence of stakeholder meetings and agreements between practice placement providers for the structure of the apprenticeship. A practice placement learning policy is also in place.
  - Through quality theme 1 we confirmed that learners will be taught by the education providers' academic staff and qualified professional practitioners with relevant expertise. All staff are managed in accordance with the AECC University College People Policy. A new programme leader in Dietetics will be recruited for the start of the programme. All staff will either have a teaching qualification, or will be required to complete one, within the first three years of their employment.
  - The education provider delivers an existing HCPC approved pre-registration dietetics programme, with staff and associate staff delivering speciality areas of practice. They also have expertise in non-dietetic specific aspects of the curriculum.

- o The visitors were satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that demonstrates that all standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o Evidence in the mapping document and unit specifications showed that outcomes meet the standards of proficiency for dietitians.
  - o The mapping document showed that learning outcomes ensure that learners can meet the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. This was evidenced in the module content within Professional Skills for Dietitians 1 and 2, and Dietetics in Practice modules.
  - o The information provided in the annual review of course content, and external examiner reviews, demonstrated that the programme is relevant to current practice.
  - o The visitors noted that there are clinical evidence and research-based elements which are integrated clearly into the programme to support and develop evidence-based practice.
  - o We noted that the learning and teaching methods are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes. This was evidenced in the programme structure, through integrated practice placement, and experiential learning alongside lectures, tutorials and seminars. This also includes different modes of learning such as peer learning and the inclusion of transferrable skills, including reflection. Digital skills are a component of modules.
  - o There was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the programme has been designed in a way that would ensure that learners who complete it meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills and are fit to practise.
  - o The visitors were therefore satisfied that all standards within this SET area have been met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o In addition to the further information received through quality theme 2, we understood that all learners would undertake practice-based learning outside of their own department/workplace setting. This includes simulated practice-based learning and that undertaken with the education provider.
  - o The visitors noted appropriate structured placement provision throughout the programme which addresses professional skills, behaviour change and dietetic clinical practice. There are opportunities for clinical learning, involving assessing and treatment of patients, within various settings.
  - o The education provider stated that the apprenticeship programme provides 1078 hours of practice–based learning. This is designed to offer a range of activities for learners to apply and consolidate their learning, to apply academic theories, and to engage in workplace practices. This enables them to further develop their skills and competencies to meet the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency to register. Professional Skills for Dietitians and Dietetics in

Practice modules meet the Programme Learning Outcomes associated with practice-based learning.

- o Sufficient information was provided to evidence how the structure, range, and duration of practice-based learning supports achievement of the learning outcomes.
- o To support practice educators, the education provider holds a bi-annual Practice Based Learning Event to offer them training and support and to facilitate opportunities to meet the needs of learners in practice.
- o The visitors saw sufficient evidence to determine that all standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o The education provider submitted a standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping, unit specification documents, and a programme specification document to support this standard.
  - o The visitors noted that the assessment strategy is comprehensive and includes a range of assessments to meet different learner strengths and to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs). Methods of assessment include the use of reflective essays, portfolio development, literature review, and conference presentations. An overview of the assessment strategy was evidenced in an Assessment Grid.
  - o Assessment methods have been developed and selected for their ability to assess the Programme Learning Outcomes and to comply with the education provider's assessment policies.
  - o Standards of professional practice are embedded into the programme learning.
  - o The visitors saw sufficient evidence to determine that all standards within this SET area are 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

On 28th June 2024, the 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:
- All standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved.

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
AECC University College	CAS-01478-K9Z6L0	Duane Mellor Helen White	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: • Staffing and physical resources are already in place. However, the education provider plans to recruit a new programme lead and a pharmacist to support the delivery of the new programme. • The education provider has a wide range of physical spaces including, seminar rooms, clinical rooms, specialist simulation spaces and learner focused areas. • The library has been adapted into a high-tech learning facility complete with over 10,000 books, online journals, medical databases, anatomical and

				other learning and academic software.
Programmes				
Programme name			**Mode of study**	**Nature of provision**
MSc Dietetics (Integrated Degree Apprenticeship)			Full time	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
MSc Podiatry (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist			16/01/2023
MSc Dietetics (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			16/01/2023
MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			09/01/2023
MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2021
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2020
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Radiotherapy and Oncology)	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer		01/09/2020
MSc Speech and Language Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			09/01/2023