Performance review process report

University of Plymouth, 2018-22

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of the University of Plymouth. This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future, and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have:
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission to consider which themes needed to be explored through quality activities.
- Undertook quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed.
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed.

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The areas we explored focused on:
  - The education provider's processes to ensure appropriate placement capacity for all programmes. This is done through sourcing alternative placements, utilising simulation, and detailed planning for changes in learner numbers.
  - Ensuring there are appropriate staff numbers to support learners. They are reallocating lecturer hours to ensure there is appropriate resources and support for increasing learner numbers and maintains staff:learner ratios.
  - The monitoring and evaluation of service user and carer involvement across their programme. They obtain feedback in several ways regarding this and have appropriate processes in place to monitor engagement.
  - Their approach to addressing attainment gaps across all protected characteristics related to equality, diversity, and inclusion. These characteristics are reported on annually and action plans are developed in response to issues or gaps highlighted.
  - The education provider's processes to embed the new standards of proficiency and identify where they are already incorporated into programmes. They have completed mapping exercises for all programmes and are making appropriate amendments where needed.
- The provider should next engage with monitoring in five years, the 2027-28 academic year, because:

o The visitors were satisfied with the ongoing performance of the education provider. Data points show they are performing as expected with regards to learner satisfaction, continuation, and outcomes. They have demonstrated they can appropriately respond to challenges and shown insightful reflections regarding their performance during the review period. The visitors agreed there is a low risk to their performance moving forward and therefore recommend the maximum review period.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This is the education providers first interaction with the performance review
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) decided: • when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review will be in the 2027-28 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 performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:
- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

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

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

Thematic areas reviewed

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

How we make our decisions

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

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

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support a review of this education provider:

Duane Mellor	Lead visitor, dietitian
Shaaron Pratt	Lead visitor, diagnostic radiographer
Hayley Hall	Service User Expert Advisor
Sophie Bray	Education Quality Officer

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. The performance review process does not always require

profession level scrutiny which requires all professionals to be represented in the assessment panel. Rather, the process considers how the education provider has performed at institution level, linked to the themes defined in section 1. Lead visitors have the option to appoint additional advisory partners where this will benefit the assessment, and / or where they are not able to make judgements based on their own professional knowledge.

In this assessment, we considered we did not require professional expertise across all professional areas delivered by the education provider. We considered this because the lead visitors were satisfied, they could assess performance and risk without needing to consider professional areas outside of their own.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 23 HCPC-approved programmes across nine professions. It is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1995.

Their earliest programme has run since 1995, whilst 15 of their programmes have first intake dates of 2018 or later. This education provider's last annual monitoring process was carried out in 2019-20. The education provider went through the approvals process for new degree apprenticeship programmes in Occupational therapy and Radiography in 2021-22 which were both approved with no conditions or recommendations. This suggests they have been successful in expanding their offerings, and they have demonstrated sustainability of this through the approvals process.

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	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2014
	Chiropodist / podiatrist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2005
	Dietitian	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2004
	Occupational therapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2013
	Paramedic	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2018
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2004

	Practitioner psychologist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1995
	Radiographer	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2019
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2019
	Prescription Only Medicine – Administration			2005

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[1].

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Numbers of learners	1002	1008	2022	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure was presented by the education provider through this submission. The education provider is recruiting learners broadly at the benchmark suggesting they are recruiting to their programmes in line with what the programmes were approved for.
Learner non continuation	3%	3%	2019-2020	This Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 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 equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's

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[1] An explanation of the data we use, and how we use this data, is available here

			performance has been maintained. This suggests the education provider is performing as expected.
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	94%	93%	2019-2020	This HESA 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 slightly 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 4% We explored this by reviewing their reflections on the fall in score in the Data Reflections section. They have identified potential causes of these changes and have appropriate plans in place.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	June 2018	The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education." We explored this by reviewing their reflections in the Data Reflections section. They have reflected on how they have worked towards maintaining their quality of teaching and have re-applied for this award pending results in 2023.
Learner satisfaction	74.4%	75.2%	2022	This National Student Survey (NSS) data was sourced at the summary level. This means the data is the provider-level public data. The data point is broadly equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has been maintained. This suggests the education provider is performing as expected.

				We explored this by reviewing their reflections on a fall in scores at programme level in the Data Reflections. They have identified potential causes of these changes and have appropriate plans in place.

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

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

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

We sought out clarification on each quality theme via email communication to allow the education provider to elaborate on previous information they had sent or send further evidence documents to answer the queries.

We have reported on how the provider is performing on all areas, including the areas below, through the Summary of findings section.

Quality theme 1 – Ensuring appropriate practice placement capacity where risks have been identified.

Area for further exploration: The education provider submitted thorough reflections on how they managed financial stability during the monitoring period. They described the challenges such as short notice changes to learner numbers, and how they managed these through annual strategic planning. When discussing securing placements, they stated some professions were at risk, however, they did not provide sufficient reflections on what the risks were and how they planned to address them. For examples, placement providers who run apprenticeships are reluctant to maintain their existing placement commitments. The visitors explored what disciplines are at risk and what measures are in place to minimise the risk identified. The visitors queried how they will manage recruitment if there is limited placement capacity. It is important the education provider can ensure there is appropriate

placement capacity to support learners across all programmes, and they are planning for risks identified.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted further details on the professions at risk of inadequate placement capacity and how they are managing this. They outlined ways they are working across their programmes to manage increasing learner numbers and the need for more placements. They are building their non-frontline placement capacity and sourcing alternative provision to support the need for placement opportunities for learners. They also provided reflections on how they are managing the increased competition from other education providers for dietetic placements. They are seeking to expand online clinic provision, simulation alternatives and alternative supervision models such as peer placements. They are developing capacity in new currently unused areas of the health and social care sector.

The management of placement capacity for apprenticeship provision alongside more conventional programmes is managed by their Central Apprenticeship Hub. Proposals for new apprenticeship programmes are assessed to ensure their viability and impact on other programme's resources. They stated there is no risk to the sustainability of programmes in terms of learner recruitment. The visitors were satisfied there are appropriate responses and plans in place to ensure ongoing placement capacity in response to changing learner numbers and apprenticeship provision.

Quality theme 2 – Ensuring appropriate staff:learner ratios are maintained with increasing learner numbers.

Area for further exploration: The education provider outlined how they are recruiting above target for some programmes, but ensure programmes are appropriately resourced through annual strategic planning discussions. They submitted reflections on learner numbers for some, not all, programmes. The visitors noted there was no mention of how staff:learner ratios will or have been maintained. The visitors explored how the staff:learner ratios might be impacted by the introduction of new programmes and the uncertainties in recruitment as well as sustained increase is learner numbers. It is important all current and new programmes are appropriately resources and staffed to ensure learner support.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained how the response to recruitment concerns is formulated from a combination of workload planning for each member of staff with a careful audit of staff:learner ratios. They outlined how staff:learner ratio in class is managed through agile reallocation of additional lecturer hours when in class teaching groups increase in size. They were in the process of reviewing their workload allocation tool. They stated this will help them effectively manage staff resources and ensure that learners' needs are adequately met. The education provider stated how they review their staff:learner ratio annually. Where there is an increase in learner numbers, they seek to employ additional staff if required or allocate funding for specialist teachers to support the core team. The visitors were satisfied there are appropriate staffing plans in place to ensure the maintenance of staff:learner ratios.

<u>Quality theme 3 – Monitoring and evaluating service user and carer (SU&C) involvement to ensure it is appropriate.</u>

Area for further exploration: The education provider has different SU&C groups who ensure the active involvement of SU&Cs in programmes. They submitted details of ways SU&Cs are involved such as online meetings, delivering teaching content and open days. However, there was no reflection on how the involvement of SU&Cs is evaluated, monitored, or managed. The visitors explored how the education provider manages and assesses the effectiveness of SU&C involvement. It is important the education provider is monitoring SU&C engagement with their programmes to seek continual improvement and development.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted additional reflections with regards to how they monitor and evaluate SU&C involvement across their programmes. Module feedback includes questions about SU&C inclusion. This enables insight from the learner's perspective on their experience of SU&C involvement to inform development. The SU&C group is discussed on an ad hoc basis at team and committee meetings, which ensures staff are aware of the group's role. The group provided teaching content for the programmes which is reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance. SU&C representatives participate in annual programme review meetings ensuring they contribute to the development of programmes. The visitors were satisfied there are processes in place for obtaining feedback, monitoring, and developing SU&C involvement in the programmes. Whilst they were satisfied the education provider's performance is not creating a risk to SU&C involvement, they recommended programme staff consider a more coordinated approach to the monitoring and evaluation of SU&C involvement.

<u>Quality theme 4 – Ensuring appropriate monitoring and actions for addressing attainment gaps.</u>

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted how the education provider provided examples of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) was considered throughout the learner journey. The education provider outlined how they had improved the attainment gap for disabled learners and continue to address the attainment gap for learners from area of high deprivation. They did not present the outcomes for monitoring across all EDI groups or reflect on how they are addressing the identified attainment gap for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) learners. The visitors explored how they are monitoring and addressing attainment gaps and recruitment issues across the range of protected characteristics. It is important the education provider have process to address all areas of EDI and identify ways to improve accessibility to their programmes for learners cross all groups of protected characteristics.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider outlined how they established a governance structure for the oversight and management of their Access & Participation Plan (APP). They monitor the plan and progress against EDI targets and review activities. Where progress is not on track, the APP Operations Group requires the lead for the relevant strand(s) to develop an action plan to mitigate against the lack of progress and reports on this to the Student Success Committee.

Each School produces an annual review which reflects on APP data which leads to action plans to address issues. The School APP Leads are responsible for raising awareness of underrepresented groups identified as priority groups within each School.

They addressed the visitors feedback on the lack of reflection on BAME learners. They outlined how the monitoring outcomes of all protected characterises are reported every year by programme. In 2021 a School wide gap in the attainment of disabled learners was identified and an action plan put into place. As a result, this year the attainment gap was reduced. They have an action plan in place to reduce the attainment gap for minority learners to reach milestones which is being reset after the disruptions of the pandemic. The visitors were satisfied the education provider is appropriately addressing attainment issues. They noted the APP focuses largely on black learners. They recommended the education provider widens this to consider other protected characteristics in a similar way to how it was done for attainment.

<u>Quality theme 5 – Ensuring appropriate processes are in place for embedding the new Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) programmes.</u>

Area for further exploration: The education provider submitted a clear explanation of how information regarding the new SOPs was disseminated and implemented through teaching teams. This included how the information would be then approved for programme delivery in time for September 2023 starts. They reflected on how each programme team examined their programme to ensure that the new SOPs are being embedded into teaching and assessment. This process was detailed for some programmes but not all, therefore it was unclear if the process applied to all programmes. They stated some programmes have been assessed to already meet the new SOPs however it was not clear how this was established. The visitors explored if the process for embedding the new SOPs was the same for all programmes. The visitors also requested more detail on the process which was undertaken for the education provider to be assured for the programmes which they stated are already aligning to the new SOPs. It is important the education provider has ensured the new SOPs are being embedded in all programmes and there are appropriate processes in place to review and evidence this.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider outlined how new mapping templates, which include the revised SOPs mapped against programme specific core and optional modules, have been produced for all HCPC-approved programmes. Programme leads were asked to review the new mapping documentation and to clarify whether minor changes to programmes/modules would be required. This would be in line with the education provider's minor change process. The new mapping documentation will be included with the programme specification for all programmes from September 2023, and evidenced no minor changes were needed. They also provided examples of this mapping exercise which the visitors reviewed. The visitors were satisfied the education provider went through appropriate processes to ensure the new SOPs are embedded across all programmes.

Section 4: Findings

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

Overall findings on performance

<u>Quality theme: Institution self-reflection</u>

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Resourcing, including financial stability** –
  - The education provider ensured stability of their provision through effective financial planning and governance, leading to sustainable growth more than their plan. Their planning ensured their provision aligned to placement numbers, resources, and financial stability. During the review period, they successfully expanded their provision through the approval of new programmes. They stated this was through market analysis and application of new technologies which presented the opportunity to expand their provision.
  - They reflected on how they increased learner number in response to requirements from National Health Service England (NHSE). They regularly meet with NHSE to consider local workforce needs and, where feasible and appropriate, accommodate increase to learner numbers. To support this increase, NHSE also provided funding to the education provider's programmes.
  - They reflected on challenges with clinical placement capacity to support the increasing number of learners. These placement opportunities limit the expansion in recruitment of learners to programmes. They worked closely with regional partners to secure the required clinical placements to meet their recruitment targets. There were challenges relating to the recruitment of staff to support the increased learner numbers, explored in <u>quality theme 2</u>. They achieved increases in the budget for programme team staff and reported they successfully recruited to all programme team positions.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area. The education provider demonstrated how they are managing resources appropriately and responding effectively to emerging changes.

- **Partnerships with other organisations** –
  - The education provider worked with a range of other organisations including practice educators and providers, commissioning groups like NHSE, and other relevant professional bodies. They stated how the Academic Partnerships directorate seeks to develop strategic relationships with partner institutions of scale and significance, which have strategic importance or potential to them. They also have an established Central Apprenticeship Hub team who are experienced in working with employers and developing contracts.

- o They identified challenges experience with outreach/ collaboration with local further education institutes and schools. They plan to work with these organisations to widen access and participation to some of their programmes through different pathways. However, the acknowledge this increases work burden on academic staff, therefore continue to monitor the implications of this.
- o The education provider has expended their radiography placement practice footprint to include inter-professional placements. This increased the experience and exposure learners got to all areas they could potentially work. They received good feedback from new placement providers and noted this diversification relieved some of the pressure on NHS hospital placements.
- o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this area because the education provider demonstrated they are managing partnerships appropriately and responding to emerging changes.

- **Academic and placement quality** –
  - o The education provider assessed the quality of their programmes at an institutional level. They have several mechanisms for quality assurance. These include approval by the Academic Development and Partnerships Committee (ADPC), external examiner (EE) input, annual programme reporting and a periodic review process. These reviews included detailed considerations of academic and placement quality. They enable programme staff to conduct detailed reviews of programmes, drive improvements and produce action plans.
  - o They reflected on the challenges obtaining feedback from learners at module level, which makes directing change and improvements difficult to focus. They have liaised with the Student Voice Project team to promote better module level feedback including appropriate timing of survey and suitability of questions to encourage completion.
  - o The education provider developed a Placement Educational Audit tool. This was to ascertain continued assurances that the placement learning environment provides safe and supportive learning. It supports the dissemination of good practice and development of action plans for areas in need of development and improvement.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area. They demonstrated how they were monitoring academic and placement quality appropriately.

- **Interprofessional education** –
  - o The education provider reflected on their interprofessional education (IPE) opportunities. They launched the Plymouth Integrative Health and Social Care Education Centre (PIHC) in 2021 to enable learners on health and social care programmes within the Faculty of Health to learn with and from each other. They plan to further develop IPE opportunities by identifying and supporting areas of good practice and by facilitating collaboration between health and social care programmes.
  - o They reflected on how IPE opportunities changed and developed during the pandemic and with the introduction of PIHC. They identified

challenges around curriculum differences, timetabling, and pandemic restrictions. Some IPE opportunities were held virtually, and they obtained feedback which identified areas for improvement. Despite these challenges, they have maintained appropriate IPE opportunities for learners to meet learning objectives on their programmes.
- They submitted several examples of how they continually developed IPE opportunities. These included making previously ad hoc sessions into timetabled sessions and developing case studies.
- The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area because the education provider demonstrated how they were monitoring and developing IPE opportunities.

- **Service users and carers** –
  - The education provider reflected on how they involved service users and carers (SU&C) in programmes in multiple ways. These included development of programme curriculums, delivery of teaching, learner recruitment and research.
  - They identified challenges regarding SU&C involvement during the pandemic due to restrictions. This reduced the SU&C group's participation in recruitment activities. The education provider reflected on how it was important to ensure they were still able to engage with the teaching and additional aspects of the programme such as Open Days and recruitment. They were able to engage through pre-recorded sessions or in person when possible, during open days through a blended model of SU&C involvement. This blended approach also addressed logistical challenges with timetables which ensured SU&C involvement was integrated into programmes.
  - We explored how SU&C involvement was monitored and evaluated through quality theme 3. Feedback is obtained from individual SU&Cs, as well as the SU&C group being discussed and reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate involvement with programmes. The education provider used a range of terms to describe SU&Cs across their programmes, outlining this is due to discipline-relevant language. The visitors recommended they consider using standardised language across all HCPC-approved programmes to ensure consistency to make the SU&C role clear to learners.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area because the education provider demonstrated they are monitoring and developing SU&C involvement across their programmes. Whilst they were satisfied the education provider's performance is not creating a risk to SU&C involvement, they recommended programme staff consider a more coordinated approach to the monitoring and evaluation of SU&C involvement.

- **Equality and diversity** –
  - The education provider has a range of range of policies, guides, mandatory training, and further training courses to support their approach to EDI. They developed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2022-2025). They stated the importance of adapting practice to

meet the needs of different groups and individuals is covered within the teaching, using a range of case studies and within the assessments.

- o They acknowledged the School of Health Professions is an area of low diversity and they have had issues with attainment gaps. This was explored in quality theme 4 to understand how they are addressing this across all protected characteristics. They are improving their outreach for recruitment of learners, and a formal decolonisation process has been undertaken by an Associate Professor with resultant recommendations. They developed a mentoring programme and revised the interview process to support EDI. They noted the APP focuses largely on black learners only. They recommended the education provider widens this to consider other protected characteristics in a similar way to how it was done for attainment.
- o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area because the education provider demonstrated they are continually developing their approach to EDI to benefit learners.

- **Horizon scanning** –
  - o The education provider reflected on potential future challenges and changes. For example, they anticipate surplus applications for some programmes such as physiotherapy, and under recruitment to other programmes such as podiatry. They reflected on how this requires careful resource management to ensure they can support all learners. For the programmes with insufficient recruitment numbers, they plan a high level of outreach and marketing to increase applications, such as activities to make the profession more visible to school aged children.
  - o They are seeking to diversify placements by finding new environments for learners. They expect this to increase placement capacity, as explored in quality theme 1, which supports the growing professions.
  - o They acknowledged their prescribing programme must undergo continuous iterative adjustments and improvements to maintain relevance. This is in relevance to the ongoing changing situation related to individual professions prescribing rights, the scope and specialist practice of Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) learners and of advancing practice roles. To enable this, they are undergoing workload planning to review and implement relevant changes.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider submitted a few examples for reflections across the range of programmes and professions offered. They identified ways they plan to manage risks and utilise opportunities appropriately.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**

- o The education provider stated how all programmes underwent a review and mapping exercise to ensure they aligned to the revised SOPs. They provided a clear explanation of how information was disseminated through teaching teams and implementation. This included how the information would be then approved for programme delivery in time for September 2023 starts.
- o During the mapping exercise, programme teams identified required changes to module content/ assessment. Changes will initiate the minor change process which involves liaison with EEs. Programme documentation will be revised and updated accordingly.
- o The School of Health Professions highlighted and promoted the new standards through their Teaching and Learning processes. Programme teams had to report back through Teaching and Learning governance structures to describe how they are incorporating the new SOPs into their programmes. This is an ongoing process and is supported by their Quality Team. These processes were explored further in [quality theme 5](#), and the education provider submitted example documentation to demonstrate how they are ensuring the new SOPs are appropriately reviewed and embedded.
- o After review, some programmes were deemed to already cover the changes to the SOPs through current curriculum content. Changes to these programmes were not needed. The visitors were satisfied the education provider has appropriate processes in place to appropriately ensure the new SOPs are embedded into their programmes.

- **Impact of COVID-19** –
  - o The education provider moved teaching and learning online where appropriate, and alternative summative assessments were approved. They introduced a Safety Net Policy to mitigate against the negative impact of the pandemic on learner performance and profession.
  - o They reflected on the challenge of delivering a contemporary programme, with a need for rapid changes to the timetable as the pandemic evolved. This was supported by a programme lead who was experienced with online programme delivery, who was influential in assisting with the move to remote delivery and supporting staff and learners.
  - o The education provider stated the biggest impact related to clinical practice placements. They outlined how a significantly greater proportion of clinical contact hours take place online since the pandemic. This ensured learners could access the clinical placement hours needed during their programme.
  - o They identified the need for ensuring learners had technological support during the pandemic. To address this, all learners completed a digital readiness quiz during their induction and get signposted to the Student Hub and the Disability Services team for additional support. They also changed the way modules and assessments were delivered to learners.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area as the education provider reflected on what worked well from some of the adaptations made to academic delivery and support.

- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods** –
  - The education provider developed a Digital Strategic Plan 2021-25 (DSP). This built on previous initiatives and capitalised upon learning from the enhanced presence and increased learner and staff engagement brought about through a networked approach to teaching and learning during the pandemic. They have a Digital Learning Environment Steering Group, who ensured the appropriate development of a suite of educational technologies.
  - They reflected on the challenges of staff and learners having to adapt quickly to the technological shift caused by the pandemic. They outlined how support provided by their IT Services was excellent and helped staff and learners adapt. The education provider acknowledged how the pandemic accelerated changes to practices which otherwise would have taken a significant amount of time to be introduced. They are considering lessons learned from this and what worked well for blended learning moving forward.
  - They noted a decrease in engagement from learners due to the change to online delivery of programmes. They addressed this by ensuring learners were contacted by personal tutors where engagement was low, and utilised specific software to gain more interaction for learners. Some of the technology introduced during the pandemic will continue to be used through a blended learning approach.
  - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on the development of their digital platforms and new ways of working. They have responded to the needs of learners through simulation and modification of programme delivery.

- **Apprenticeships** –
  - The education provider developed an Apprenticeships Strategy (2022), to help address employment gaps in the Southwest region. They have a Central Apprenticeship Hub team who manage partnerships with employers and develop relationships. They are working closely with other organisations such as NHSE, the National School of Healthcare Science and Healthcare Science Outreach Southwest to develop training provision in the region.
  - They reflected on the challenge of ensuring there is placement capacity for their undergraduate programmes alongside apprenticeship opportunities. They noted two major challenges. Firstly, Trusts who run apprenticeships showed significant reluctance to maintain their existing placement commitments, as explored in quality theme 1. Secondly, the apprenticeship programmes offer significant complexity to programme teams who are already under significant pressure. They are closely engaging with the placements/ employers to ensure placement offerings are not impacted by the introduction of apprenticeship provision. They are also continually assessing and reviewing resourcing to ensure there are appropriate staff in place to manage the growing provision they offer.

o   They received approval for a Diagnostic Radiography apprenticeship in February 2023,which is due to start in September 2024. The visitors were satisfied with their reflections regarding the challenges and viability of apprenticeship provision.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education** –
  o   The education provider outlined how they have not been reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) within the review period. Despite this, they plan to maintain alignment with the Quality Code as a source of reference when policies and processes are updated. The visitors were satisfied with their reflections on the UK Quality Code.

- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies** –
  o   The education provider has an alert system which notifies the Associate Head of School responsible for practice placements of any Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports of concern. Ongoing monitoring of placement suitability is maintained by drawing on internal and external evaluations, reports, and audits.
  o   When concerns were identified at one placement Trust, an internal discussion was held between the Associate Heads of School with responsibility for practice placements. No specific issues were raised by learners, and it was assessed there were no immediate concerns therefore learners remained in placement.
  o   HCPC were made aware of one placement issue through contact with NHSE in the Southwest region. The education provider engages with NHSE where deactivation of placement has been required. Action plans are created and followed up, with reactivation taking place when appropriate. They reflected on how this has resulted in some positive changes, benefitting the placement itself and thereby the service-users as well as enhancing the learner experience.
  o   The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on developments in processes to ensure their programmes have ongoing compliance with all relevant organisations.

- **Office for Students monitoring** –
  o   The education provider stated the Office for Students (OfS) had not undertaken any monitoring of them during the review period. They have assessed the risks and opportunities for them created by the newly released OfS conditions of registration. They outlined how they considered the risk presented by these to be moderate. They believe the new conditions will offer positive opportunities to embed more

efficient practice, effective cross-institutional working, and genuine quality improvements.
- o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to monitor their progress towards institutional aims and how they have developed and improved their processes.

- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies** –
  - o The education provider outlined how all HCPC-approved programmes are accredited by their respective Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). They have a dedicated Quality Team who provide support to programme teams with all aspects of the approval, regulation, accreditation, and ongoing monitoring of programmes by PSRBs.
  - o They reflected on challenges regarding professional accreditation of their BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography with Foundation Ultrasonography programme. They state it is the first of its kind in the country and has met the needs of the profession. However, the programme does not produce a sonographer and therefore is not accredited by the Consortium for Sonographic Education (CASE). They are in discussion as to the next steps regarding the professional accreditation.
  - o They provided examples of where engagement with professional bodies had shaped the direction of professional guidance and learner resources. This included commendations, and recommendations such as need for staffing increases. This was addressed through new staffing appointments being made. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Curriculum development** –
  - o The education provider reflected on how each programmes curriculum is aligns to their relevant regulatory and professional body standards and guidance. Programme staff are part of relevant forums/ committees to ensure they can appropriately horizon scan to ensure the content of programmes is current and valid. Programmes are continually updated to ensure the curriculum reflects internal and external factors which influence professions.
  - o Programmes are currently going through a curriculum review to ensure alignment with the new SOPs, as discussed in the thematic reflection section. Changes will be implemented in the 2023/24 academic year. They outlined how there will be an additional review of professional issues modules for implementation in 2024/25 to integrate an increased focus on leadership.

- The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to review programme curriculum. They have identified where changes have been made and the justifications for these changes.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance** –
    - The education provider outlined how their programmes were meeting guidelines set out by relevant professional bodies. When changes are required, programmes go through the minor change process and programme documentation is revised.
    - They reflected on the challenges with the fast moving profession of radiography, requiring them to keep up with changes. They outlined how the Programme Lead has several links to professional bodies, which enables them to keep on top of upcoming changes.
    - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider provided examples of responses to professional body guidance changes, illustrating their responsiveness and appropriate means to address changes.

- **Capacity of practice-based learning** –
    - The School of Health Professions developed a new Practice Education Development post in 2023 to support the development of practice learning and build capacity across the Southwest. They work alongside the Associate Head of School; profession specific placement leads and external practice partners.
    - The education provider reflected on local and national challenges with placement capacity. This was explored in [quality theme 1](#). They worked closely with regional partners to secure the required clinical placements to meet their recruitment targets. They also explored innovative ways of securing placement hours through simulation using actors, long arm supervision placements and peer-enhanced e-placements (PEEP). This allows for a robust and flexible approach to clinical placements which should be able to increase capacity for learners. The use of peer enhanced e-placements also provides a novel approach for sharing of learning experiences between learners which will enhance their learning and professional development. Despite challenges, all learners were able to complete the required placement hours.
    - They outlined how they plan to focus on building placement capacity for 2023-24. This will be through placement supervision models, collaborative learning in practice placements and increasing placement diversity. They will work closely with local Clinical Placement Expansion Programme (CPEP) projects. They will utilise primary and social care as well as Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) provider placements, utilising non-patient facing placements.
    - The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider provided examples of responses to challenges with placement capacity and have provided a range of examples of innovations to increase opportunities for learners.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Learners** –
  - o The education provider collected feedback from learners in of formal and informal ways. This includes Committee meetings, end of module feedback, Student Perception Questionnaire (SPQ), National Student Survey (NSS) and learner representatives. Learner feedback is used to inform programme and school annual reviews and increases visibility to learners to show how they respond to all forms of feedback.
  - o The education provider outlined how they consider externally collected learner feedback, such as the National Education and Training Survey (NETS) survey. This highlighted some of the difficulties the School of Health Professions is experiencing with a particular paramedic placement. This was discussed further in the assessment of practice education providers by external bodies section, and the education provider is working with NHSE to address this issue.
  - o In response to a growing demand for learner support and a reduction in overall satisfaction reflected in the NSS, the School of Health Professions created a new Associate Head of School (AHoS) for Student Experience position. A post was also created to appoint a 'Success and Wellbeing Champion'. This was a non-academic who has an excellent understanding of the current learner support systems and how to access them. The new positions were created to increase support for learners and address issues highlighted by the feedback collated.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider provided examples to show they acknowledged and responded to feedback and are seeking to find ways in increasing learner satisfaction.

- **Practice placement educators** –
  - o The education provider outlined how all programmes seek feedback from placement educators. This is done through support meetings, placement monitoring, informal communications, and formal feedback during annual review meetings.
  - o They reflected on challenges regarding a lack of radiography practice educators in the region. To address this, the education provider held events to train practice educators to prepare them for the role. An online package was developed for practice educator training days during the pandemic. This is now a blended training package. A Microsoft Teams site was developed to share information which was received positively by the practice educators as it allowed flexibility for accessing resources. They have also adjusted assessment methods to make accessibility easier for practice educators.
  - o They stated how feedback is encouraged in multiple ways and collaboration to problem solve issues. They submitted examples of

feedback and actions resulting from this which the visitors agreed demonstrated they are addressing feedback appropriately.
  o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider demonstrated how they have obtained and addressed feedback from placement educators.

- **External examiners** –
  o The education provider stated external examiners (EE) are integrated into their quality assurance processes to ensure academic standards are maintained. They identified the challenges identified through EE feedback, including the bottleneck of assessments, alignment of processes between different programmes and navigation of extenuating circumstances. They submitted information on how they are addressing areas of feedback, such as reviewing assessments and improving liaison between programme staff.
  o They reflected on the positive outcomes of the changes they made, providing several examples across their programmes. This demonstrated they are addressing feedback appropriately to develop programmes and address issues. They stated how they will continue to engage frequently with the EEs ensuring that they have excellent access to the teaching materials and assessments.
  o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider clearly outlines how EE feedback is used to drive actions and is considered as an important contribution to develop programmes.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Learner non continuation:**
  o The percentage of learners not continuing the programmes is comparable to the benchmark. The education provider reflected on how podiatry had the biggest reduction in the number of learners not continuing. This aligned to the low numbers of learners in recent years as the programme has been restructured and revalidated with apprenticeship pathways added to the existing offer.
  o They reflected on challenges posed by the pandemic which changed entry requirements to programmes. They outlined how continuation rates are a product of the balance between the suitability of candidates that are allowed onto the programme, the quality of the teaching and learning in the programme. Despite this, they achieved continuation rates in line with the benchmark.
  o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area and agreed the education provider's reflections were appropriate.

- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**

- o The percentage of learners who complete the programmes who are in employment is above with the benchmark. The education provider reflected on how this was a positive outcome considering the recent impact of the pandemic.
- o They have a Careers Service department which is accredited through the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service (AGCAS) Membership Quality Standard. There is also a careers hub and several resources available to learners. These support all learners from foundation year to beyond graduation.
- o They reflected on how the high rates for continuation, completion, and progression, is evidence of the success of their approaches to designing and delivering innovative and engaging programmes, alongside outstanding tailored student support. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area and agreed the education provider's reflections were appropriate.

- **Teaching quality:**
  - o The education provider was awarded a TEF Silver award in 2018. They identified how a priority of their Education and Student Experience Strategy 2018-23 is an action plan for employability to directly address this aspect of their TEF performance and learner outcomes more generally. They submitted their application for TEF 2023 and are awaiting the outcome. The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area and agreed the education provider's reflections were appropriate.

- **Learner satisfaction:**
  - o The education provider outlined how NSS data only currently captures the undergraduate (UG) provision. They reflected on how the overall satisfaction had decreased significantly for some programmes in 2022, and there has been little recovery of NSS scores nationally.
  - o They reflected on how one area to show consistent improvement was learning resources. They attributed this to the ability of learners to return to campus post pandemic. They outlined challenges which were identified through NSS feedback, and how they are addressing them. This includes concerns regarding obtaining and addressing feedback from learners. The education provider formed an NSS working group and are responding to the specific areas for improvement.
  - o They outlined how for programmes that have had a significant decrease in scores the Deputy Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience works with the relevant programme teams. They work to understand the underlying problems and action plans are developed in each case.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to monitor learner satisfaction and developments they plan to make to improve this.

- **Programme level data:**
  - o The education provider submitted their staff to learner ratios for programmes, showing they are appropriately resourced. They outlined

how some staff are external, and there is a range of expertise to provide teaching and support to learners.

o The visitors were satisfied with their performance in this portfolio area. The education provider reflected on their processes to respond to market demand with the development of new programmes.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review.

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

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

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

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2027-28 academic year.

Reason for next engagement recommendation
- Internal stakeholder engagement
  - o The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider were learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations, external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
  - o The education provider engaged with several professional bodies. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision.
  - o The education provider engaged with other relevant professional or system regulator(s) (e.g., NMC, OfS). They considered the findings of other regulators in improving their provision.
  - o The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply
  - o Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period.
- What the data is telling us:

- From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.
- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a five year monitoring period is:
  - The visitors were satisfied with the ongoing performance of the education provider. Data points show they are performing as expected with regards to learner satisfaction, continuation, and outcomes. They have demonstrated they can appropriately respond to challenges and shown insightful reflections regarding their performance during the review period. The visitors agreed there is a low risk to their performance moving forward and therefore recommend the maximum review period.

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 education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report.

Appendix 1 – 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			01/09/2020
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2019
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography with Foundation Ultrasonography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/02/2004
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2008
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship Route	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			19/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/08/2018
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2004
BSc (Hons) Podiatry	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/09/2005
BSc (Hons) Podiatry (degree apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/01/2021
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)	FLX (Flexible)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2023
Independent and Supplementary Non-Medical Prescribing (Level 6)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2019
Independent and Supplementary Non-Medical Prescribing (Level 7)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2019
MDiet (Hons) Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/08/2022
MOccTh (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2020
MPhysio (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2020
MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2013
MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2021

MSc Podiatry (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist	POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/01/2021
MSc Podiatry (Pre-registration)	PT (Part time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist	POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/01/2021
PgDip Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist		01/09/2020
Post Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist		01/09/2013
Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist	01/01/1995
PgDip Podiatry (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		