

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Birmingham City University
Name of programme(s)	MSc Speech and Language Therapy, Full time
Approval visit date	08 – 09 May 2019
Case reference	CAS-14345-V5Y3Z1

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Executive Summary

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.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards 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.

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

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 undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make 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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Joanne Watchman	Lay
Clare Attrill	Speech and language therapist
Claire Brewis	Occupational therapist
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive
Luke Jenkinson	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Alison Honour	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Birmingham City University
Pauline Watkis	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Birmingham City University
Victoria McGrath	Quality Assurance Team Member	Birmingham City University

Sara Augustus	Quality Assurance Team Member	Birmingham City University
Judy Clegg	External panel member	Representative from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Speech and Language Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Speech and language therapist
First intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 25
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02053

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Not Required

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	This a new programme, so we met with learners and graduates from the education provider's BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy programme. We also

		met with learners on the MSc Physiotherapy and MSc Dietetics programmes.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

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. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

Recommendation: The visitor's recommend that the education provider includes clear information in the programme documentation about the expectation of learners to provide information about any issues relating to conduct, character and health.

Reason: From their review of the evidence provided, the visitors considered this standard was met. In the MSc SLT Placement Student Handbook for Students, the visitors noted that learners on the programme would be expected to submit a self-declaration each year, which confirms suitability of learners' character and health. Learners are also expected to declare that they have not received any criminal convictions since the initial criminal convictions checks. DBS. The visitors noted that this information was not written in relevant programme documentation, such as the programme handbook. The visitors considered that if this information was not made explicitly clear to learners in the programme documentation, they may not be aware of their responsibilities to provide information about issues relating to their conduct, character or health throughout the programme. The visitors also considered it may not be clear to learners that they are required to declare any issues on the programme, and that this responsibility is not limited to when they are on practice-based learning. The visitors heard from the programme team how these requirements are made clear through verbal discussions with learners throughout the programme. However, the visitors recommend that information about the expectations of learners to declare any issues with their conduct, character or health is made clear in the programme documentation, to ensure learners are made unambiguously aware of these expectations throughout the programme.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors recommend that there is sufficient

evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met, and that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 04 July 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).