

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Keele University
Name of programme(s)	MSci Paramedic Science, Full time
Approval visit date	27 - 28 April 2021
Case reference	CAS-16783-H1K6S4

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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 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:

Tristan Henderson	ParamedicParamedic
Kenneth Street	ParamedicParamedic
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the virtual approval visit

There were other groups involved with the approval process as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Katie Maddock	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Keele University
Claire Evans	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Keele University
Lara McMurtry	Internal panel member	Keele University
Eliot Rees	Internal panel member	Keele University
Sally Thompson	External panel member	University of Cumbria
Graham Harris	Professional body member	College of Paramedics

Robert Fellows	Professional body member	College of Paramedics
Sakina Waller	Professional body member	College of Paramedics

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSci Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	ParamedicParamedic
Proposed first intake	01 September 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02306

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involved consideration of documentary evidence and a virtual 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 ask for 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.

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes
Internal quality monitoring documentation	No

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provider decided to move this event to a virtual (or remote) approval visit. In the table below, we have noted the meeting held, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice educators	Yes
Programme team	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the virtual approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 11 June 2021.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that there is a clear procedure in place for learners who wish to opt out of certain activities.

Reason: From the documentation the visitors noted there did not seem to be a clear mechanism for dealing with learners who, for whatever reason, were not comfortable participating in certain activities involving body manipulation or partial undressing. This was raised at the visit and the programme team gave assurances that the documentation had not given full information regarding this aspect, and that learners who felt unable to consent to particular activities would be given alternative ways of achieving the learning goals of those activities. However, the visitors were not able to see the updated materials giving more information and so were unable to determine at this point whether the standard was met. They therefore require further information

regarding how the education provider will appropriately manage learners who wish to opt out of certain activities.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an effective system for monitoring all placements, including those not with West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Reason: The visitors did not receive in the documentation clear evidence of how the audit system for placements would work in detail. They were satisfied that the education provider would be able to secure enough capacity for placement, and had effective relationships in place with their practice partners. However, they were not clear how exactly the education provider would undertake appropriate auditing of their placements, especially those outside the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS), which is an experienced placement provider working with many HEIs. The visitors raised this at the visit and were told that an audit process was in place and that it would be straightforward to provide examples of how the process worked. However, without having seen these examples of completed audits, the visitors could not be sure at this point that the standard was met, especially in light of a lack of clarity around practice educator training, which they were told would be addressed through the completed audit forms. They therefore require further evidence showing that the education provider has completed sample audit forms available, to ensure an effective ongoing audit process.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all practice educators are appropriately trained, particularly those coming from outside West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS).

Reason: From the documentation, the visitors were not clear what the content of regular practice educator training would be. At the visit, they discussed this with the programme team. The programme team told them that the education provider would expect all practice educators to be appropriate for the role. Placement providers will hold live registers of Practice Educators and Keele University will maintain a log of Practice Educators, their qualification (including date) and attendance at annual update sessions. However, the visitors considered that there was uncertainty about how the education provider would ensure regular updates for staff supporting learners in their placement settings, especially among the non-WMAS providers. Evidence showing how this updating process would work was not available. The visitors were therefore unable to determine that the standard was met and require further evidence showing how the education provider will ensure that they have an appropriate strategy for updating practice educators as necessary.

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.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Recommendation: The education provider should keep under review its relationships with placement partners to ensure that they continue to deliver sufficient practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the condition was met at threshold, because the education provider had a process in place to ensure that all learners coming on to the programme would have appropriate practice-based learning. They did note, however, that as the programme upscaled learner numbers in subsequent years, the education provider would need to ensure that their processes continued to be sufficient for the task.

6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: The education provider should keep under review the progress of its appointment of an external examiner, so that one will be in place as planned by the start of the second year.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the condition was met, as there was a process for the appointment of an appropriate external examiner. They were aware that the education provider's plan was that the appointment would take place towards the end of the first year of the programme. They did wish to note that it was important that this appointment was made as necessary and that the education provider should ensure that the plan laid out was followed.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 06 July 2021 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).