

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University Centre South Devon
Validating body	South Devon College
Name of programme(s)	FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology, Full time FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology, Flexible
Approval visit date	16 July 2019
Case reference	CAS-14490-B6L1Z0

Contents

Section 1: Our regulatory approach.....	2
Section 2: Programme details.....	3
Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment.....	3
Section 4: Outcome from first review.....	4
Section 5: Visitors' recommendation.....	5

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:

Hugh Crawford	Hearing aid dispenser
Deirdre Keane	Lay
Ruth Baker	Practitioner psychologist - Clinical psychologist
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive

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.

Karen Stockham	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Plymouth Marjon University
Maureen Robillard	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	South Devon College

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Hearing aid dispenser
Proposed first intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 18
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02086

Programme name	FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Hearing aid dispenser
Proposed first intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 18
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02087

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 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	Comments
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	Not Required	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, 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 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 06 September 2019.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will develop service user and carer involvement such that service users and carers are clearly contributing to the quality and the effectiveness of the programme, and how they will ensure that such involvement is appropriately planned and evaluated.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard, including a policy for the University College of South Devon Patient, Carer and Service User Group and a patient consent form. This evidence made it clear that some form of service user and carer involvement with the programme was planned. However, they were not clear

from the documentation what form this involvement would take. They met with service users who were involved with the education provider's other programmes, but these individuals were not able to give the visitors clear information on their planned involvement with the programme under review. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors received verbal assurances that appropriate service user and carer involvement was being planned. A support document for service users and carers has been produced, and there are arrangements in place for matters like payment. However, the visitors were not able to be clear about the operational detail of the service user and carer involvement. They were therefore unable to determine that the standard was met, and require further evidence demonstrating that a strategy is in place to involve service users and carers appropriately in the programme, and that this involvement can be appropriately monitored and evaluated.

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 education provider should consider reviewing the wording of their fitness to practice policy to ensure that it accurately reflects HCPC procedures and expectations.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that this standard was met as the education provider had procedures in place for monitoring learners' conduct, character and health on an ongoing basis throughout the programme. However, they noted that the education provider's UCSD Student, Supervisor and University Staff Placement Handbook (HAD) states that second year learners whose regular FTP check flags a caution or conviction will be referred to the HCPC at the end of the second year. This is not an HCPC requirement. This standard, 3.16, requires that education providers have institutional procedures for ensuring that learners continue throughout their studies to be suitable persons to practise in their profession. It is the responsibility of the education provider to monitor continuing suitability of learners during the programme. The HCPC's FTP procedure applies only to registrants or to applicants for registration whose application highlights an FTP issue that has not been dealt with by the education provider.

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 24 September 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](#).

