

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Worcester
Name of programme(s)	MSc (Pre-registration) Physiotherapy, Full time accelerated MSc (Pre-registration) Occupational Therapy, Full time accelerated
Approval visit date	10-11 February 2021
Case reference	CAS-16283-D9V0G4

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.....	5
Section 5: Visitors' recommendation.....	6

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 Stead	Occupational therapist
Carol Rowe	Physiotherapist
John Archibald	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.

Marie Stowell	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Worcester
Teresa Nahajski	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Worcester
Jane Cronin-Davis	External Adviser	Kingston University and St Georges University of London

Debbie Thackray	External Adviser and Chartered Society of Physiotherapy representative	University of Southampton and Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Jenny Pinfield	Internal Panel Member	University of Worcester
Annette De La Cour	Service User Representative	University of Worcester
Jack Austin	Student Representative	University of Worcester
Nicola Rawlings	Quality Unit Representative	University of Worcester
Alison Reeves	Observer	University of Worcester
Nina Paterson	Professional body representative	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Rachel Wadlow	Professional body representative	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Caroline Grant	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Patricia McClure	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Beth McKay	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc (Pre-registration) Physiotherapy
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Physiotherapist
Proposed first intake	01 July 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 32
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02286

Programme name	MSc (Pre-registration) Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Occupational therapist
Proposed first intake	01 July 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 32
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02287

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	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	No	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

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	Comments
Learners	Yes	As the programmes have yet to run, we met with learners from the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy and BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy programmes.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	No	Since the move to virtual visits, we do not ask to meet with service users and carers. If necessary, we explore areas relating to service users and carers in other, appropriate meetings. However, the visitors did not have any areas to explore with service users and carers.
Facilities and resources	No	Since the move to virtual visits, we do not ask for a session about facilities and resources. We explored areas relating to resourcing in other, appropriate meetings.

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 25 March 2021.

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate the time permanent members of staff spend delivering the programme, plus the use of other educators such as associate lecturers, to ensure the programme can be delivered effectively.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider informed the visitors the course team are suitably qualified and experienced educators who will ensure achievement of the course outcomes. The education provider said both programmes would run in parallel with each other. Four modules are shared modules and will be delivered by experienced academics who may be either occupational therapists, physiotherapists, or from another discipline. Associate lecturers, and other academic staff from the School, support physiotherapy and occupational therapy modules with specialist knowledge in specific area of practice. All permanent staff are members of the Higher Education Academy or are current students of the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCertHE), and will become members on completion of the qualification. Associate lecturers undergo a formal recruitment process to confirm teaching skills and suitability, including their qualifications.

From the information given, the education provider informed the visitors that to ensure the programme will be delivered effectively, two new members of staff were to be recruited to start in July 2021, one new member for September 2021, and one new member for September 2022. The visitors were also provided with information as to the whole time equivalent staff who were employed at the education provider. In the meeting with the senior team, the visitors were made aware that staff teaching on the

MSc programmes also have the option of teaching on the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy and BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy programmes.

From the information given, the visitors could not be sure of the time staff spent on delivering the MSc programmes. Therefore, they were unclear whether the resources provided for the programme allow for an appropriate number of staff who are able and equipped to deliver the programme effectively for the proposed number of learners. The visitors were also unclear how much time the MSc staff would be asked to commit to the already approved BSc (Hons) programmes and whether this would impact on their ability to deliver the MSc programmes.

The visitors require more information about the time staff, including staff to be recruited before the programme starts in July, and other educators, such as associate lecturers, spend working on the programme. This is so that the education provider can justify the number of staff they have in place in relation to the practical requirements of the programme, the number of learners, their needs and the learning outcomes to be achieved.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the decisions about designing and delivering interprofessional education (IPE) were made, so learners are prepared to work with other professionals and across professions for the benefit of service users and carers.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider informed the visitors that inter-disciplinary learning is a core feature of both programmes, with shared modules in both years. The visitors were also informed that there is a college-wide inter-disciplinary learning group, which includes members from physiotherapy and occupational therapy, and a strategy for developing and embedding inter-disciplinary learning at the university. All practice-learning modules include opportunities for inter-disciplinary learning where possible.

The visitors were made aware that both programmes would run in parallel with each other. Four modules are shared modules and will be delivered by experienced academics who may be either occupational therapists, physiotherapists, or from another discipline.

The HCPC does not set how a programme should include interprofessional education (IPE), the types of learning activity, the professions involved or length of time. At the visit, the learners informed the visitors that they learned with, and from, learners and professionals from occupational therapy or physiotherapy disciplines as part of shared learning. However, the visitors were aware learners did not have opportunities to do so with, and from, other professions and so the visitors were unclear about how the education provider ensures IPE is as relevant as possible for learners. The education provider must therefore demonstrate how they have made decisions about the design and delivery of IPE so learners are prepared to work with other professionals and across professions for the benefit of service users and carers.

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 27 April 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](#).