Approval process report

St Mary's University, Twickenham, Occupational therapy, 2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve the Occupational Therapy programme at St Mary's University, Twickenham. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

We have:
- Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme(s) should be approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted the programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable as this case did not emerge from a previous process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide whether the programme is approved
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the education provider: • The education provider's next performance review will be decided after the review of their ongoing 2023-24 performance review process.

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 approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme 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 approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:
- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)

- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme.

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

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

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 this review:

Jennifer Caldwell	Lead visitor, Occupational therapist
Julie-Anne Lowe	Lead visitor, Occupational therapist
Kabir Kareem	Education Manager

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers two HCPC-approved programmes across one profession. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2018.

The education provider engaged with the approval process:

- Quality assurance 2018 for the MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration), FTA (Full time accelerate). After considering the education provider's response to the conditions set, we were satisfied that the conditions were met, and the programme was approved in 2018. Quality assurance 2020 for the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy, FT (Full time) programme. After considering the education provider's response to the conditions set, we were satisfied that the conditions were met, and the programme was approved in 2020.

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	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2018

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.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	70	90	N/A	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 is the benchmark figure, plus the number of

				learners the provider is proposing through the new provision. We assessed the education provider's documents to see whether there are sufficient resources for an effective programme. The visitors were satisfied with the information provided.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	9%	2020-21	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above 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 6%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the education provider is currently engaging with the performance review process where this will be picked up.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	97%	2020-21	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests

				the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 4%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because we considered that the data did not give any cause for concern.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2023	The definition of a [Gold / Silver TEF award provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there was no impact on SETs considered.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	77.9%	87.8%	2023	This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 9.9%.

				We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there are no impact on SETs considered.
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	N/A	N/A	The education provider is currently going through their first performance review in 2023-24 year.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Information for applicants** –
  - o The education provider confirmed there is a general admission policy which applies to applicants and is available on their website. The policy includes the general information about the application process including interview requirements.
  - o The policy includes overall aims such as encouraging diversity by recruiting learners from different ethnicities and social backgrounds. It details the entrance requirements and admission procedures for Programmes at different levels (from foundation degrees to Postgraduate Certificate in Education) and part-time learners.
  - o There are also programme specific guidelines for learners which include more detailed information about admission requirements for each programme.
  - o This policy is set at institutional level and will apply to all programmes. This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - o The education provider's admissions policy includes information about the requirements in terms of English Language requirements. Further detailed information including the required International English

Language Testing System (ILETS) score for their BSc and MSc programmes are available on their website.

- o They explain how their admission process enables them to seek out and recruit applicants with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments are made throughout the application process to meet individual needs.
- o Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed to determine their suitability for any programme with a panel team which includes academic staff and practitioners. Applicants are required to submit their disclosure and barring certificate prior to starting on their selected programmes. They will be required to complete a health questionnaire to confirm they are fit to study and practice.
- o Their policy and processes are set at institutional level and will apply to all programmes. This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - o The education provider referred to the section in their Academic regulations for taught degrees. It explains how applicants may apply for exemptions if they meet the criteria of having relevant credits earned from another institution or relevant certificated prior learning. This information would be considered by the Head of Admissions on the advice of the Course Lead.
  - o They noted how MSc and BSc Physiotherapy are required to answer specific questions to determine their levels of experience, communication skills and leadership. These are further explored during interviews and contribute to the final decision with regards to their prior learning and experience.
  - o Their policy and processes are set at institutional level and will apply to all programmes. This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is set out in their 'Equality and Diversity Inclusion Policy statement 2022. They also have a dedicated page for this area on their website. This information explains how as an institution, they are "committed to creating an inclusive culture promoting equality of opportunity and respecting differences amongst its staff, learner and other stakeholders".
  - o The statement includes details who the various internal stakeholder responsible for the implementation of the policy e.g. he Vice-Chancellor and Senior Staff, and the Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion Staff Board.
  - o The policy also includes procedures for Admission of learners who will be admitted according to the "University Admissions Policy". It also includes the procedures they have in place to support all learners and applicants who require support and/or adaptations.

- Their policy and processes are set at institutional level and will apply to all programmes. This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment-None

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]** –
  - The education provider has stated that all programmes are mapped to the HCPC SET's and SOP's and the Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCOT) Learning Development domains. They currently deliver two HCPC approved programmes (BSc Physiotherapy – BSc degree MSc Physiotherapy pre-registration – MSc degree).
  - The education provider's academic regulations for taught degrees 2023/24 includes the policies and processes required for the delivery and management of programmes they deliver. These include regulations for programmes at different levels, assessment regulations, and external examining.
  - This aligns with our understanding with how the education provider operates.
- **Sustainability of provision** –
  - The education provider explained how all programmes engage in annual planning round to ensure they are appropriately resourced to support learner numbers and meet the requirements of Professional Statutory and Statutory Bodies (PSRB). The resources which are considered during this process include:
    - Administration staffing needs,
    - Technical support;
    - Placement administration support; and
    - Equipment and facility development.
  - They also explained how each programme has an allocated budget for smaller equipment items and can request funding for larger equipment in the 'capital expenditure funding round'.
  - The information we have reviewed, and the education provider's previous performance suggests they are committed to the sustainability of HCPC programmes. They stated they are committed to the development of new facilities and equipment for this new Occupational Therapy programme. They have a process which enables all programmes to identity the teaching resources they require which are then purchased before they start delivering the programmes.

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[1] This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o The education provider has a process which enables the review of all programmes on an annual basis. This process includes the review of data for all programmes, individual module evaluation and feedback from staff and learner forums. The requirements for ensuring the effective delivery of all programmes are set out in their Academic regulations for taught degrees 2023/24. It states that the Academic Board have overall responsibility for subjects and programmes they deliver. The Centre for Teaching Excellence and Student Success (CTESS) are responsible for Quality Assurance and Enhancement matters.
  - o Course leaders are responsible for individual programmes and report to Heads of Department. Module Convenors are responsible for each module with specific programmes and the efficient organisation and administration of each module. Other responsibilities include the development and monitoring of modules and all assessment procedures connected with the module.
  - o The Academic regulations states each programme shall have a programme board. These board meet once per semester and are attended by the Course Lead, Module Convenors, two learner representatives and external advisor and the Head of Department.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o The education provider explained how they are committed to ensuring that programmes are appropriately resourced and supported. Their approach for ensuring staff management and development is set out in their institution People Strategy 2023-24. A key aim of the Strategy is to develop their staff to reach their full potential. This will be achieved through "developing a supportive, inclusive, collaborative and inspiring working environment". They also ensure all staff:student ratios meet the relevant PSRB requirements.
  - o Their baseline documents set out their approach for investing in the management development of their staff and provide funding opportunities for them. Staff development is provided through the Initial Professional Development Route (IPDR), the PG Cert Academic Practice and Continuing Professional Development Route.
  - o The education provider noted how newly hired staff receive tailored guidance based on their experience level, teaching responsibilities, and role. They provide ongoing mentorship, and assigning an experienced academic staff member to support them during their initial years.

- o They are also in the process of having a placement administration office will manage the increase in staff numbers for programmes needing additional placements.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The education provider explained how they have partnered with private organisations such as physiotherapy clinics and care homes. These will contribute to the continuity of the programme and appropriate resources. They have a wider portfolio collaborative partnership across the institution which is overseen by the Head of Partnerships who chairs the Academic Partnership Committee. They confirmed all partnerships are managed in compliance with the University Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Handbook, and our Operations Manual for Collaborative Partnerships.
  - o They noted how the role of the Head of Allied Health Partnership is essential for developing national and local partnerships. They have an Allied Health strategy which applies to all applicable programmes across the education provider.
  - o Based on the information in their baseline document, we are confident the institutional approach to managing partnerships will be applied to this programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality** –
  - o The education provider's approach to ensuring academic quality of their programmes is outlined in their Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook. They explained how they have processes which are designed to meet the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) framework. Overall responsibility for Quality and Standards is shared amongst different committees and there is an established reporting structure. The Academic Board has overall responsibility for Quality and Standards and Operational management is the responsibility of the Head of Quality and Academic Partnerships
  - o They stated that the handbook is based on the following principles:
    - ▪ Standards
    - ▪ Ownership
    - ▪ Accountability.
    - ▪ Continuous enhancement;
    - ▪ Student engagement and representation; and
    - ▪ Academic regulations.

- o The education provider updated their Programme review process to combine aspects of annual and continuous monitoring. They explained how this updated approach aims to allow the sharing of best practices and facilitate ownership. Monitoring and evaluation are embedded at programme and institutional levels which inform and complement each other. Monitoring and evaluation is a process which occurs annually.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supportive practice learning environments** –
  - o The education provider explained how the Practice Placement Lead is responsible for administering practice placements. They are also responsible for monitoring the quality of placements using online evaluation forms completed by stakeholders.
  - o They ensure the appropriateness of all placements through established quality assurance process before being approved. In addition to this, the Placement Administrator conducts an annual review and monitor feedback from learners, academic staff and placement providers.
  - o The education provider have explained in their baseline document how MSc and BSc programmes have practice placement agreements in place. These aim to ensure the quality of education, skill development of learners, and service users when on practice placements. They also have a dedicated page on their website which provides guidance to learners about wellbeing on placements.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Learner involvement** –
  - o The education provider's process for managing learner feedback is set out in their Academic regulations for taught degrees policy. Through their updated baseline document, we understand there are programme level staff student forum meeting which take place mid-semester. At the end of each academic year learners complete surveys on the program and modules. University re-validation involves learner consultation on program structure, module content, delivery, and placement experiences.
  - o Learner input on course design and implementation, gathered through polling learners or class reps, assesses the impact of revalidation changes, like timetable adjustments, exam delivery, and anonymous buddy system feedback.
  - o The education provider re-validation process requires learner consultation in relation to overall programme structure and module content delivery. There are also processes in place which enable learner consultation on programme design through collecting feedback vial class representatives. Learners also contribute to committees and

working groups for areas such as revalidation, programme design and assessment.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o The information in the approval request form suggest that each programme handbook have specific information about service user involvement. The education provider do not have a formal institutional policy in place with regards to service user and carers but are in the process of developing a policy to support all Allied Health programmes. They have plans to increase the focus of service users and carer input the delivery and quality of the new programme. They expect service users and carers to be involved in the consultation in areas such as curriculum, module priorities and learner assessment.
  - o They also stated there are planned opportunities for service user and carer involvement include a multi-professional onsite clinic with occupational therapy, sports rehabilitation, and physiotherapy students.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment:

Service user and carer involvement:
- We have concluded that the institutional level standards for this area has not been met. The information indicates that service user and carers will be involved on this programme at some point but there is currently no institutional policy or process in place at the time of their submission. During a meeting between the Executive and members of the education provider's programme team, the education provider confirmed they are in the process of developing policies to manage service user and carer involvement. This is because we didn't see a clear link between institutional policies and how they would be applied to this programme. We have assessed the risk and potential impact of this issue and are comfortable with it remaining. The education provider is going through the 2023/24 performance review process and this non-alignment has been referred to this process.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
  - o The education provider has institution and programme level policies which sets out how learners should be supported. There is an institutional level personal tutoring policy which details the principles and expectations in this area. The objective of this policy is to support learner's academic, personal and professional development through an ongoing personalised point of contact at the institution.

- o Each learner is assigned a dedicated contact within their faculty for personalised academic and pastoral support, ensuring regular monitoring and assistance with learner progression.
- o The education provider has a centralised learner support hub which is located in the main library and can be accessed via phone and email. They also have pastoral monitoring for two of their HCPC approved programmes. The webpage of these programmes have links to financial support services via UK student loans, NHS grants, and hardship funding at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
  - o The education provider has multiple policies and procedures which they use to assess the ongoing suitability of learners enrolled on programmes. These policies include Fitness to Study, Fitness to Practice, and Academic Misconduct policy.
  - o They assess learner behaviour and conduct throughout MSc and BSc programmes across all years and all modules. There is also an 80% attendance requirement in order to progress through programmes. Learner's conduct, characters and health are consistently throughout practice placement on other HCPC approved programmes.
  - o The fitness to practice policy enables to education provider to take actions against learners who display behaviour posing a risk to the public or professional standards. This policy also sets the requirements for addressing misconduct procedures, DBS checks and fraudulent applications. There is a specific web page which has information for staff and learners on academic misconduct.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and will apply to the new programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
  - o The education provider explained how IPL/E has been integral to the development in all module descriptors for the MSc Occupational Therapy preregistration programme. They explained their approach to providing opportunity for occupational therapy learners to learn alongside and from other professions. Their HCPC approved MSc and BSc Physiotherapy programme has its own IPL policy.
  - o There are plans for the ongoing development of IPL pathways learning from other allies' health or health programmes. They are also in the process of setting up a multi-disciplinary clinic on campus, utilising the holistic approach to recovery, rehabilitation, health, and wellbeing advocated by occupational therapy learners. They aim to progress the IPL across the Health School and the wider institution to ensure the programmes the offer is fit for purpose.

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider has an Education Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy which is used by all programmes. This policy is informed by statistics on learner groups e.g. those with protected characteristics. This policy sets out their commitment 'to creating an inclusive culture, promoting equality of opportunity and respecting differences amongst staff, learners and stakeholders. The Board of Governors have overall responsibility for EDI and all learners are expected to act in line with requirements in this policy.
  - o There are clear appeals and complaints process which applies to all programmes across the institution for learners who feel they may have been discriminated against. This information is included in programme handbooks.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** –
  - o The education provider's process for ensuring objectivity is set out in their institutional academic regulations for taught degrees. They explained how learners must undergo the same assessment methods to earn University credits. Assessments are an integral part of module/program design, approved during validation or by the Academic Board for individual modules.
  - o Their institution polices sets out the processes for anonymous marking which is a requirement for all written assessments except for placement activities. Second marking and moderation practices are conducted to prevent bias in the assessment of work placement-related work. They also set out the requirements for moderation and external examining. Moderation entails the second marking of a representative sample of learners' work to ensure the assessment criteria are consistently applied.
  - o The education provider has specific regulations for external examining which aims to ensure qualifications awarded are comparable in standards to other higher education institutions in England. There is a requirement for all taught programmes at the education provider to have at least one education provider.

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - o The education provider's process for managing learner progression is explained in their General Regulations for Studying guidance. It explains how learners will only progress on their programmes if they meet the requirements for progression. Progression requirements for each route are set out in the respective programme specification and course handbooks.
  - o The Postgraduate Examination Board, composed of the Chair of the University Postgraduate Examinations Board and two Postgraduate Course Leads, will make progression determinations for postgraduate learners.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.
- **Appeals** –
  - o The education provider has their existing Academic Appeals Procedure in place that will apply to the proposed programme. This process aims to ensure the appeals process is objective, transparent and effective. There is a requirement for learners to have evidence of assessment being adversely affected by mitigating circumstances.
  - o There is also an extenuating circumstance policy which applies to all learners at the education provider studying for undergraduate, Postgraduate taught and Research programmes. This policy also sets out grounds for extenuating circumstances and the types of supporting evidence.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider operates and the policies and procedures will apply to this new programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Outcomes from stage 1

We have concluded that we did not see a clear link between institutional policies for service users and carers and how they will be applied to this programme. The information indicates that service user and carers will be involved on this programme at some point but there is currently no institutional policy or process in place at the time of their submission. As a result, we have decided to refer this area related to the following SETs to the current performance review process:

- SET 3.7- Service users and carers must be involved in the programme
- SET 4.9-The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

We have assessed the risk and potential impact of this issue and are comfortable with it remaining. The education provider is going through the 2023/24 performance review process and this non-alignment has been referred to this process.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

Physical Equipment: Collaboratively, practice-based colleagues and the Programme Team have identified the modern equipment necessary for the Activities of Daily Living Suite. A detailed list of these resources has been prepared, budgeted for, and the funds have been allocated. This list is the responsibility of technicians who oversee resource management.

Learning Spaces: The Royal College of Occupational Therapy Accreditation Team has conducted an on-site evaluation of the learning and teaching spaces and confirmed that they are well-suited for the program's requirements.

Library Resources: The Programme Team is in constant communication with the Head Librarian, who is informed about all the required reading materials. Efforts are being made to ensure that learners can access both digital and physical library resources.

Information Technology: In collaboration with the Technology Enabled Learning Team, the Programme Team were developing a comprehensive virtual learning environment (VLE). This platform will feature multimedia resources and provide a dedicated online space for each course module, including those for placement experiences.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: The involvement of service users and carers in the new programme has not been fully developed and implemented.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
MSc Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist	20 learners, 1 cohort	01/01/2025

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard

was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided and worked with the education provider to understand their submission. Based on their analysis of the information and evidence submitted by the education provider, the visitors agreed there, there were no areas we needed to explore via quality activity.

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the [Findings section](#).

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions**
    - The programme documentation clearly articulates the entry and selection criteria of the programme.
    - Applicants will have access to the programme specification and handbooks which set the entry and selection requirements.
    - We were satisfied that the entry criteria are appropriate to the level of the programme and will in turn ensure that learners are able to meet

our standards for registration once they have successfully completed the programme.

- o The visitors agreed the education provider have a clear admission procedure which is laid out in programme documentation and their website.
- o Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the relevant standards in this SET area are met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - o The education provider explained their approach to having ongoing collaboration with practice education providers using a range of methods. They will also engage with NHS England Workforce Training and Education directorate Southeast to develop relationships and networks to enhance placement capacity.
  - o The education provider stated practice-based colleagues collaborated with the Programme Team to identify necessary contemporary resources for the Activities of Daily Living Suite. The physical learning space was assessed by the Royal College of Occupational Therapy Accreditation Team and deemed suitable for the new programme.
  - o All handbooks and module guides will be accessible through the Virtual Learning Environment and learners will be supported by module convenors. They also have an annual review process to evaluate resource needs, replacements, and other necessary actions.
  - o The education provider delivers an existing HCPC approved pre-registration physiotherapy programme, with staff and associate staff delivering speciality areas of practice. They also have expertise in non-physiotherapy specific aspects of the curriculum. The educational institution has confirmed that the expected staff members, including a full-time Head of School specializing in Sports Rehabilitation and a Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy working 0.4 Full-Time Equivalent, will possess the necessary qualifications and be registered as Occupational Therapists. Additionally, a full-time Senior Administrator position is being recruited to enhance the placement administration team for occupational therapy.
  - o The visitors were therefore satisfied that all standards within this SET area have been met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o The education provider submitted a standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping document which is clearly linked to learning outcomes and cross referenced to other modules. The Practice Placement Assessment form includes a section for Educators and learners to evaluate the learner's adherence to professional behaviour, conduct, performance, and ethical standards. Detailed information about professional behaviour expectations is available on the programme webpage and in the programme specification document.
  - o The visitors noted the education provider have a clear teaching strategy which demonstrates and encourages a variety of teaching

methods. These were demonstrated within the programme and module descriptors which highlighted direct teaching methods, digital delivery and learner centered learning.

- o The programme incorporates stakeholder input and encourages staff attendance at conferences to ensure current practices are included. The education provider has demonstrated a strong commitment to staff development for maintaining currency in skills and knowledge.
- o They explained how profession specific frameworks and standards were central to the development of the content of the programme. They used the Royal College of Occupational Therapy Career Development Framework, to ensure the programme reflects the philosophy, and skills of the profession.
- o The visitors agreed the programme demonstrates strong alignment between SOPs and learning outcomes, with clear cross-referencing to other modules. Additionally, there is excellent mapping of learning outcomes at both the programme and module levels to the SETs and SOPs.
- o The visitors were therefore satisfied that all standards within this SET area have been met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o The education provider outlined an approach for implementing practice-based learning throughout the programme, emphasising the close interrelationship between research, practice, and theory. Learners will engage in research-related activities alongside modules. This will enable fostering a connection between theory and practice throughout their studies.
  - o The academic team has secured additional funding to expand, particularly for supporting practice-based elements of the programme. They are also exploring joining the NHS Futures Collaboration Platform to aid in practice educator development and recruitment.
  - o In the programme development, specific roles have been established to support practice-based learning. These include an academic lead for placement modules, a Practice Placement Tutor, and an administrator. Practice educators, who have contributed to the programme's design, will also offer placements. Additionally, a multiprofessional team will oversee the interprofessional sports rehab clinic on campus.
  - o The education provider demonstrated how the academic team considered the Council of Deans Allied Health Professional (AHP) Educator Framework during the development of this programme. They stated it will act as a reference point to ensure practice educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider's programme structure and learning outcomes, as outlined in the Programme Handbook and Practice Placement Handbook, emphasise the connection between practice and academic modules. They noted practice-based learning is well-planned, with thorough consultation involving all stakeholders documented in the submission.

- o The visitors saw sufficient evidence to determine that all standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o The education provider explained how their assessment strategy aligns with the teaching and learning approach which reflects underlying learning theories. Modules incorporate various assessment tasks to develop essential skills, including digital competencies. They have mapped modules to HCPC SOPs to ensure alignment between learning outcomes and assessments.
  - o Learners are introduced to the HCPC standards in the first module. The practice placement assessment emphasises professional behaviours aligned with standards. They noted how their vision is to produce competent practitioners through their teaching, learning, and assessment strategy. Learners complete a development plan based on the four pillars of practice. The education provider aligns assessment processes with Universal Design for Learning principles.
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider's assessment methods in module descriptors are well varied. Modules align with HCPC standards, and the programme handbook outlines a clear assessment process, including resits.
  - o The practice placement assessment provides strong evidence of learners' professional behaviour. It aligns with SOPs and links to learners' development plans based on RCOT Pillars of Practice. This alignment is well-documented in the Programme handbook, specification, and placement documentation. Learning outcomes are closely tied to assessments, allowing learners to demonstrate critical thinking and practical skills progressively throughout the programme.
  - o The visitors saw sufficient evidence to determine that all standards within this SET area are met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Section 5: Referrals

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

We have concluded that we did not see a clear link between institutional policies for service users and carers and how they will be applied to this programme. The information indicates that service user and carers will be involved on this programme at some point but there is currently no institutional policy or process in place at the time of their submission. We have assessed the risk and potential impact of this issue and are comfortable with it remaining. The education provider is going through the 2023/24 performance review process and this non-alignment has been referred to this process.

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

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

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:
- All standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved.

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on approval. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation, and the nature, quality and facilities of the provision.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
St Mary's University, Twickenham	CAS-01498-P9C7Q6	Jennifer Caldwell Julie-Anne Lowe	Through this assessment, we have noted: The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.	**Physical Equipment**: Collaboratively, practice-based colleagues and the Programme Team have identified the modern equipment necessary for the Activities of Daily Living Suite. A detailed list of these resources has been prepared, budgeted for, and the funds have been allocated. This list is the responsibility of technicians who oversee resource management. **Learning Spaces**: The Royal College of Occupational Therapy Accreditation Team has conducted an on-site evaluation of the learning and teaching spaces and confirmed that they are well-suited for the program's requirements. **Library Resources**: The Programme Team is in constant communication with the Head Librarian, who is informed about all

				the required reading materials. Efforts are being made to ensure that learners can access both digital and physical library resources. **Information Technology**: In collaboration with the Technology Enabled Learning Team, the Programme Team were developing a comprehensive virtual learning environment (VLE). This platform will feature multimedia resources and provide a dedicated online space for each course module, including those for placement experiences.

Programmes		
Programme name	**Mode of study**	**Nature of provision**
MSc Occupational Therapy	FT	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2020
MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2018