
Approval process report

Buckinghamshire New University, occupational therapy, 2022-23

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve occupational therapy programmes at Buckinghamshire New University. 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 institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Reviewed the programmes against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programmes should be approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This assessment was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether the programme(s) are approved.
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-2027 academic year.• The development and implementation of institution wide policies to manage inter-professional learning. This should be reviewed in the next performance review in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Included within this report.

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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(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / ongoing 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:

Joanne Stead	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 10 HCPC-approved programmes across 3 professions. 8 are pre-registration programmes and 2 programmes are for post-registration annotations. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2011.

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	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2011
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2017

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	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	435	319	2022	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.

				<p>The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>As detailed in quality theme 1 and quality theme 2, we explored whether there are sufficient resources for an effective programme. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's response and did not need further information.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	8%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from summary data. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 5%.</p> <p>We explored this area through quality themes 2 and 3. We sought assurance about the long-term sustainability of the programmes.</p>
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	94%	95%	2019-20	<p>This data was sourced from summary data. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the education provider is</p>

				<p>performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has been maintained.</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there was no impact on the SETs.</p>
Learner positivity score	78.1%	88.8%	2023	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 11%.</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment. This is because the data point suggests that the education provider has taken effective actions to improve learners' satisfaction of their programme.</p>
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	N/A		<p>The education provider undertook performance review in the 2021-22 academic year and the visitors determined that a five-year review period was appropriate. This means that</p>

				the education provider is performing at a high level and that there are no concerns about their ability to deliver HCPC-approved provision.
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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 –**
 - The admissions policy and procedure outline the institution wide policies covering information for applicants. In addition to this, there are programme specific policies which apply to individual disciplines. The information includes programme specific applicant guides, programme information and programme specifications. This information will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The Admissions policy and procedure relating to this area is institution wide and applies to all programmes. For some programmes it is adjusted to accommodate the profession specific requirements such as health and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check requirements. These policies will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure is an institution wide policy and applies to all programmes. This policy will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The Equality, diversity and inclusion policy is included in the Admissions Policy and is an institution wide policy. This will apply to the proposed programme.

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 Register¹ –**
 - There are institution wide policies covering the delivery of the provision to the expected threshold level of entry to the Register. The Academic Qualifications Framework sets out the framework for qualifications, academic level credit and structural requirements and the Academic Assessment Regulations cover requirements for achievement of credit and awards by individual learners. In addition to this External Examiners are appointed to confirm standards of achievement. These policies will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The Annual Monitoring Policy is an institution wide policy and ensures the sustainability of the provision. They also have Student Protection Plans in place. These policies assess the risks to programmes and where necessary action plans are created. This policy will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - To ensure effective delivery of the programme, there are institution level policies in place. The Academic Qualifications Framework, Annual Monitoring Policy and External Examiner Policy ensure programmes are effectively supported and managed, as the policies clearly outline the requirements of programme delivery and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - The Performance Development Review Policy and the Learning and Development Policy outline the education provider's commitment to providing training and development opportunities to their staff. The Learning and Development Policy is specifically designed to ensure all staff are provided with the relevant support to undertake their duties. There is also a Board Assurance Framework exemplar - Education with Professional Practice; People Strategy 2018. These policies and procedures are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - The Placement Learning Policy is an institution wide policy and covers core principles, academic quality, responsibilities and insurance. This policy supports partnerships and will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality** –
 - The Academic Qualifications Framework, Annual Monitoring Policy, Fitness to Practise Procedure, Programme Approval and Amendment Policy and Personal Tutoring Policy are institution wide policies. These policies and procedures ensure academic quality on all programmes and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
 - There are several policies and procedures set at institution level to ensure practice quality and a safe and supportive practice learning environment. Some of these include Student Bullying and Harassment, Student Complaints procedure, Placement Learning Policy. These policies and procedures are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learner involvement** –
 - Student Representation Policy supports and encourages learner involvement on all programmes and is an institution wide policy. In addition to this, the Learning Contract ensures learners are involved with the specific programmes. These policies will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
 - Occupational therapy Placement Educators and Expert by Experience Involvement Strategy is a profession specific policy and will apply to the proposed programme. The education provider is also working on introducing an institutional expert by experience strategy and this will be an institution wide policy.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support** –
 - The education provider offers a range of services to support the wellbeing and learning needs of their learners. Some of these services include the Student Health and Wellbeing Service, Academic Registry Helpdesk and Academic Advice and Student Learning and Achievement Unit. In addition to this there is also a Personal Tutor Policy, and this is available to all learners. These policies are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Ongoing suitability** –

- Suitability is considered through the Fitness to Practise Procedure and Personal Tutor Policy. All these policies are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - Inter-professional policies are currently programme specific, however the education provider is working on establishing a school-wide policy. This policy will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The Equality, diversity and inclusion policy, Mitigating Circumstances policy and Interruption Withdrawal and Transfer procedure are all institution wide policies and procedures and cover equality, diversity and inclusion. These policies and procedures will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - To ensure assessments are objective, all programmes follow the guidance set out in the Assessment and Feedback policy, Academic Assessment regulations and External Examiner policy. These policies and procedures ensure objectivity and clear quality processes for assessment and marking and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - All assessment processes comply with the Assessment and Feedback policy and Academic Assessment regulations. These policies are institution wide and will apply to the proposed programme.
- **Appeals –**
 - The appeals procedure is an institution wide policy and allows learners to appeal their marks. This policy will apply to the proposed programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

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
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	30 learners; 1 cohort per year	01/09/2024
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Apprenticeship	WBL (Work based learning)	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Apprenticeship	25 learners; 1 cohort per year	01/09/2024

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 on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

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

Quality theme 1 – plans for ongoing collaboration with external stakeholders

Area for further exploration: The education provider demonstrated how they collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders during the design and development of these programmes. They consulted with occupational therapy stakeholders, local NHS Trusts and practice education providers. The education provider did not explain their plans to continue collaboration with external stakeholders in the future.

The visitors explored the education provider's plans for ongoing collaboration with stakeholders, particularly in program delivery and assessment. There was concern that external stakeholder feedback and expertise might not be adequately considered in future programme reviews or developments. It is important for the education provider to demonstrate how external stakeholders will contribute to

curriculum review and development. We are also seeking assurances regarding continuous placement provisions and the alignment of the apprenticeship programme with employers' requirements.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained how they will continue to engage with stakeholders in the future. Their processes will ensure the effectiveness of the delivery and assessment of the programmes and ensure sufficient placement provisions.

They gave detailed explanations with regards to the strategic meetings they will have with external stakeholders. The programme team will have regular meetings with Allied Health Professional (AHP) practice-based learning leads. These meetings will be through the regional working group which consists of practice educator leads in NHS organisations, local authorities, and other Higher Education Institutions within their region.

The Professional Lead will continue to attend the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire (BOB) AHP Faculty meetings and have regular discussions with practice-based learning providers. They provided detailed information on stakeholder forums, including the Institute of Health and Social Care, Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy (BHSCA), and BOB AHP Faculty Lead Practice Learning Strategic Panel (PLSP). These forums promote a collaborative approach among academics, occupational therapists, practice educators, and service partners.

Occupational therapists in practice will deliver specialist subject areas as guest lecturers. Their practical knowledge and expertise will be beneficial when reviewing and updating the programmes.

Quality theme 2 – approach to recruitment of lecturers to deliver specialist subjects.

The visitors reviewed staff CVs from the educational provider outlining the available expertise for the programmes. However, the information did not sufficiently detail who and how specialist subjects would be delivered, although guest lecturers, associate lecturers, and non-occupational therapy experts were mentioned as part of the delivery team.

The visitors decided to explore how the broad spectrum of subject expertise will be addressed. It is important for the education provider to explain how they will recruit the staff with the appropriate level of qualifications and specialist expertise to deliver specialist subjects on these programmes. While guest lecturers were mentioned, the process of recruiting and supporting specialist guest lecturers was not explained. We seek assurance that the education provider has effective processes in place to

ensure learners are taught by subject matter experts, including the recruitment and support of such experts.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further - we agreed to initially explore this area further by requesting email evidence from the education provider. We considered this would be the most effective method to understand how the programmes demonstrated this area.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained how all lecturers for the programmes are recruited through the University's process and advertised on relevant websites, with appointments based on essential criteria. They will have expertise in various occupational therapy areas are recruited, including paediatrics, mental health, neurology, orthopaedics, public and global health, acute and community settings, and non-traditional areas of practice. The core team is supplemented by associate and guest lecturers to enhance subject teaching. Associate lecturer skills are mapped to programme's needs, and contracts are issued for support in assessments, simulation, seminars, group work, and practice skills. The programme team provides supervision, teaching support, joint sessions, and offers the 'Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education Short Course' to associate lecturers.

The visitors are satisfied with the updates provided by the education provider which demonstrated how specialist lecturers would teach learners. They agreed in response to this quality activity, the education provider gave detailed explanations with regards to the strategic meetings they will have with stakeholders. They agreed there are effective processes in place to support and develop associate and guest lecturers. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied that through this quality activity, the education provider have adequately addressed the issue and they considered the standard has been met.

Quality theme 3 – approach for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the programmes.

Visitors reviewed the initial documentary submission and fed back the areas and reasoning to determine the first quality activity. Based on their review of the evidence, they concluded these did not sufficiently address their initial concerns and requested further information. A virtual meeting was held between the education provider and the visitors where the gaps in information was discussed and further written information was submitted by the education provider. This was classed as the second quality activity.

Quality activity 1

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted that the education provider had explained within their submission there are plans for a phased increase the number of learners each term. They plan to have a total of 75 learners per years which means there will be 3 cohorts per year with 25 learners in each cohort. The education provider explained how they would ensure there are sufficient practice

practice-based learning available for learners through audits of all practice settings prior to learners attending the practice. They had also provided a staffing provision which confirmed appropriate expertise had been appointed. Based on the information and evidence reviewed, the visitors were not satisfied with how the sufficient staff would be recruited to match the increase in learner numbers. The recruitment policy they reviewed did not effectively set out the plans to increase the learner numbers. The visitors are concerned about the risk to the sustainability of programmes with regards to having adequate resources for delivery and securing practice-based learning.

We enquired about the education provider's strategy consistently securing practice-based learning and recruiting staff for the rising learner numbers. The visitors decided to explore the education provider's long-term plan for sustaining practice-based learning. This was to ensure there will be sufficient experienced staff to maintain an adequate staff-learner ratio in delivering the programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further - we agreed to initially explore this area further by requesting email evidence from the education provider. We considered this would be the most effective method to understand how the programmes demonstrated this area.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider, through a documentary response, addressed the long-term sustainability of practice-based learning. They attended workshops focused on meeting practice-based learning demands in their region and are part of a working group with practice educator leads from various stakeholder groups to ensure practice-based learning capacity. They plan to expand capacity by engaging with voluntary and independent sectors, aiming to develop non-traditional practice-based learning such as role-emerging, research, and leadership practice-based learning. These efforts aim to provide learners with diverse practice-based learning experiences and skills for working with various communities.

In addressing concerns about staffing for increased learner numbers, the education provider provided documentary updates, confirming compliance with the Royal College of Occupational Therapy staff/learner ratio. They specified three FTE occupational therapist lecturers and 1.6 FTE support staff, submitting a staffing plan aligned with the two-year increase in learners.

Quality activity 2-

Areas for further exploration – The visitors observed that the education provider's updated information focused on capacity, lacking an effective strategy for recruiting qualified staff to support the increase to 75 learners. While a staffing plan was submitted, it lacked sufficient details on the approach to recruiting necessary staff. We decided to explore this further to ensure there will be sufficient staff to match the planned increase in learner numbers.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by having a virtual meeting with the education provider and receiving additional written

information. We thought this was the most effective way to understand how the education provider will ensure there will be sufficient staff to match the phased increase in learner numbers.

Outcomes of exploration: During the virtual meeting, the education provider explained how the programme leads will work with local partners with the aim of expanding practice-based learning capacity. They addressed this concern by explaining their plan to review the 2024/25 strategic plan. They informed the visitors having financial resources will be made available for staff recruitment to meet learner number requirements through effective strategic planning.

Additionally, they provided a Staff Planning Cycle Timeline detailing actions from September 2024 to August 2025, ensuring compliance with Royal College of Occupational Therapist staff-student ratio requirements and maintaining quality in teaching and learner experience. The document shows the timeline and summary for staff recruitment for these occupational therapy programmes. They have also recruited practice-based learning administrator who will be responsible for the management of practice-based learning.

The visitors are satisfied that the education provider has appropriate plans and resources to ensure the sustainability of the programmes. They have demonstrated through documentary evidence how they will recruit staff to match the phased increase of learner numbers. They have demonstrated how staff will be recruited during each phase of the expansion in each term during the first year of the programme. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied that through this quality activity, the education provider have adequately addressed the issue.

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 entry requirements for both programmes are clearly set out in the programme specifications. These include the University's general entry requirements with specific additions including:
 - Practical experience relating to occupational therapy such as shadowing work;
 - Health care work experience; and
 - Satisfactory completion of an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS).
 - There are specific additional entry requirements for apprentices which includes employment by a healthcare provider, and evidence of recent academic learning.
 - The visitors agreed clear details of recruitment and interview process have been submitted by the education provider. They are satisfied that the relevant standard in this SET area is met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
 - The education provider collaborated with internal and external stakeholders including partner organisations during the programme's development. Meetings with the occupational therapy course team and local Trusts, both formal and informal, were conducted to facilitate this collaboration. The visitors reviewed evidence of partnership meetings but noted it was insufficient to demonstrate how they will continue to engage with external stakeholder in the future. This was explored through quality activity and finding are [in quality theme 1](#). We are satisfied with their response regarding this quality activity, because the education provider effectively explained their approach to external stakeholder engagement.
 - The visitors confirmed the existence of partnership agreements and verified processes ensuring commitment to practice-based learning s by partners. The education provider detailed an audit process to ensure adequate practice-based learning s, conducted by the programme leader. Audits, led by the programme leader, assess practice settings before learners attend to determine educator capacity and confirm sufficient practice-based learning s. The visitors expressed concern about maintaining adequate practice-based learning capacity as learner numbers increase. This was explored through two round of quality activities and the findings are in [quality theme 3](#). They explained how their staffing plan aligned with the increase in learner numbers, meeting the Royal College of Occupational Therapy staff/learner ratios.

Additionally, they provided supporting information and evidence for their phased increase in learner numbers each term. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider has plans to recruit appropriate staff to match the phased increase in learner numbers.

- The visitors examined teaching staff CVs for the new programmes. Staffing for the next two academic years was discussed, but details on delivering specialist subjects were unclear. This was explored through quality activity and the findings are in [quality theme 2](#). They explained how associate and guest lecturers who will deliver programmes required to enhance learners' education will be recruited and supported by the programme team. The visitors agreed there are clear staffing provisions which shows staff with appropriate expertise have been appointed.
- The education provider recruits lecturers through the University's process based on essential teaching criteria, including core occupational therapy theory and practice skills, experience, adaptability, and willingness to learn. Guest lecturers receive support through the education provider's Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Short course, part of a broader programmes promoting best practices.
- The education provider explained what access learners' will have to specialist facilities, including shared simulation facilities with other health professional learners, in addition to standard resources like libraries, IT access, and Blackboard Learn for virtual learning.
- The visitors are therefore satisfied that the education provider has clearly demonstrated that the programme meets all standards within this SET area.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
 - The visitors agreed the education provider had submitted detailed mapping documents demonstrating alignment of the Standards of Proficiency (SOPS) with programme learning outcomes. They observed that meeting SOPs requirements is thoroughly addressed in the submission, covering practice and academic modules. The expectations of professional behaviour are explicitly outlined in the student handbooks, demonstrating the integration of SOPs throughout the programmes.
 - The visitors noted the integration of health and wellbeing philosophy, core values, knowledge, and skills in the documentation. The education provider explained that the program philosophy is a "constructive" learner-centered approach, emphasizing the importance of learners constructing their knowledge through individual and social activity. The programs aim to cultivate learners with a professional responsibility and commitment to a personal understanding and meaning.
 - Their approach to role/emerging/non-traditional placements allows learners to gain valuable experience. Staff will collaborate with organizations to co-create and monitor learning plans for placements.

Learners will receive teaching and learning experiences to support role/emerging/non-traditional placements.

- The education provider has effectively demonstrated the integration of theory and practice at all levels of learning in the programmes. They explained the range of teaching approaches to meet the learning outcomes. The programmes had been designed to meet the curriculum requirements set by the HCPC, the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and internal governance framework. The programme structure ensures integration of theoretical sessions, practical workshops, and practice-based learning throughout the three years.
- The education provider applies various teaching methods to ensure development of theoretical knowledge, professional thinking and practical skills. Reflective thinking is embedded into both academic and practice modules. Learners must include reflective elements in their practice portfolio, forming a key of part of their Competency Based Fieldwork Assessment Tool.
- Through their review, the visitors determined the programmes are designed and will be delivered in a way that will ensure learners who complete it meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills and are fit to practise.
- The visitors considered all standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - The education provider explained how the programmes integrated design enhances learners theoretical and practical knowledge. Practice placements span the three-year programmes ensuring a minimum of 1000 hours of embedded practice-based learning as set out in the curriculum. Visitors commended the thorough integration of practice-based learning, highlighting the well-positioned blocks in the course plan that specify practice-based learning occurrences throughout the programmes.
 - The education provider offers a "Training of Practice Educators" course to qualified occupational therapists aspiring to become practice educators. Occupational therapist supporting learners in practice must attend this training, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the programmes and assessment requirements. Additionally, all assessors must be HCPC registered.
 - The visitors considered there is clear evidence of effective processes in place for overseeing practice-based learning. We are also satisfied that the processes would ensure practice educators are suitable and that there is adequate support for learners to take part in safe and effective practice-based learning.
 - The visitors were satisfied all standards in this SET area are met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
 - The education provider outlined the assessment methods of learning outcomes in each module using established methods. All modules are mapped against the HCPC SOPs. Passing all assessment items within

a module is required, with no compensation or condonement available in the programmes.

- Various assessments, such as OSCEs, viva, and oral presentations, evaluate professional behaviour, standards of conduct, performance, and ethics as part of the criteria.
- These assessments, employing diverse methods, aim to measure learning outcomes for each module and also develop learners' transferable skills.
- The visitors agreed there was a wide range of appropriate assessments are use which are mapped against the module outcomes. They are satisfied that all standards within this SET area are met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:

The visitors highlighted the student facing document was of high quality. The emphasis on digital literacy and TEC enhanced activities is commended and the integration of reflection and reflective practice throughout the curricula.

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).

Following the stage 1 review, the Executive noted the Education Provider have not established school-wide policies to manage inter-professional learning. There are plans to establish these policies which will be applied to the new programme. This area will be referred to the education provider's next performance review process in the 2026-27 academic year or their next approval 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 programmes should be approved.

Appendix 1 – Summary Report

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
Buckinghamshire New University	CAS-01340-S9X5R4	Joanne Stead Julie- Anne Lowe	The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.	<p>Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities. The designated areas for simulation encompass immersive and digital rooms, hands-on practical skills training, simulated assessments like OSCEs, and collaborative group work.</p> <p>Various physical spaces for simulation are available, featuring immersive and digital rooms, specialized teaching for practical skills, and equipped for a diverse range of practice areas. This ensures a variety of teaching and learning experiences for occupational therapy learners and facilitates interprofessional learning.</p> <p>The occupational therapy program provides learners with access to various simulation facilities. These facilities allow learners to practice occupational therapy skills in a</p>

				secure environment that mimics real-world settings such as hospitals, homes, and community environments. The immersive digital room further enables simulation of outdoor scenarios. Additionally, these simulation areas are utilized for interactions with service users and to facilitate interprofessional learning.
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Programmes		
Programme name	Mode of study	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	Full time	Taught (HEI)
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Apprenticeship	Work Based Learning	Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Dip (HE) Operating Department Practitioner	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2011
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice with Foundation Year	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2018
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice – Apprenticeship	WBL (Work based learning)	Operating department practitioner			01/08/2019
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (High Wycombe)	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (Uxbridge)	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/02/2022
MSc Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			19/09/2022
Graduate Certificate Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2017
Postgraduate Certificate Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2017