Performance review process report

University of Chester, 2018-2022

Executive summary

This is a report of the ongoing process to review the performance of the University of Chester. This report captures the process we have undertaken to date to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future, and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have:
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission to consider which themes needed to be explored through quality activities.
- Undertook quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed.
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed.

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The areas we explored focused on how:
  - the education provider approaches relationships with other organisations. They do this by working with placement partners to create a community of Art Therapy clinical supervisors. They utilise their Northwest NMP Education group that includes regional programme leaders as well as staff from NHS England, The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the General Pharmaceutical Council.
  - practice educators' feedback is used to ensure quality of programmes. Practice educators' feedback is used to improve programme practices and mechanisms. This includes practice educators feedback leading to the decision to return to face-to-face teaching.
  - services users and carers are involved and contribute to their programmes. Services users and carers are involved in all programmes, provide feedback to programme teams, and are involved in programme design. Service users and carers have teaching roles, are members of the assessment panel and can provide feedback to learners directly.
  - the new faculty structure will impact future planning. This will work to streamline resources and help future planning. This fits with the education provider aim to increase learner numbers. This will place all approved programmes in the same faculty and help with the sharing of learning and resources.

- The provider should next engage with monitoring in 4 years, the 2026-27 academic year, because:
  - The visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in most areas but note some areas for improvement. They recommended a four-year monitoring period because they agreed this was an appropriate length of time, relative to performance and risk. This will give the education provider adequate time to implement action plans detailed within their submission and evaluate the results of changes to reflect upon in their next performance review.
  - This includes reflecting on areas identified as a challenge. Including;
    - The challenge presented in the low levels of learner numbers and how the education provider plans to address this.
    - The current lower than desired learner satisfaction scores when compared to the National Student Survey (NSS) benchmark.
    - The education provider's plan to develop and reflect further on their system for responding to learner satisfaction and the incorporation of additional means of monitoring this. Such as the National Education and Training survey and post-graduate taught experience survey (NETs and PTES).

Previous consideration	This is the education provider's first engagement with the performance review process. The outcome of this process will determine their future ongoing monitoring period.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • Subject to the Panel's decision, the education provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year.

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 performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) 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 performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:
- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see,

rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

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

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:
- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

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 a review of this education provider:

Susan Lennie	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Rosie Axon	Lead visitor, Arts Therapist, Music Therapist
Sheba Joseph	Service User Expert Advisor
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer
Kabir Kareem	Education Manager

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. In this assessment, we considered we did not require professional expertise across all of the professional areas delivered by the education

provider. We considered this because the lead visitors were satisfied, they could assess performance and risk without needing to consider professional areas outside of their own.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers six HCPC-approved programmes across two professions. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2005.

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	Arts therapist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2011
	Dietitian	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2005
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.

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	304	164	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. The value figure was presented by the education provider through this submission. The education provider is recruiting learners significantly below the benchmark.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	4%	2019-2020	This Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases 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 2%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the data (2019-20) available at the time of assessment showed the education provider's score was same as the benchmark which suggested they were performing in line with sector norms.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	94%	91%	2019-2020	This HESA data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below 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 4% We explored this by making the visitors aware of this ahead of their review. They factored this into their ongoing monitoring recommendation.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	June 2017	The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education."
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	75.0%	56.2%	2022	This NSS data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms When compared to the most recent data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 22.8% as they have scored 68.8% in the 2022 NSS against a benchmark of 75%. We explored this drop by asking the education provider to consider trends and could see that the data was COVID related, and recent results are moving back in a positive direction.

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the <u>thematic areas reviewed</u> section of this report.

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. 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 was performing well against our standards.

We have reported on how the provider is performing on all areas, including the areas below, through the <u>Summary of findings section</u>.

<u>Quality theme 1 - approach to relationships with partnerships with practice placement providers.</u>

Areas for further exploration - From the portfolio, we noted the education provider reflected well on the challenges faced by the limited availability of placements and their plans to address them. However, the visitors noted there was limited reflections provided with regards to the education provider's relationships with their practice placement providers or how they were maintained. Although they explained how they plan to work with practice placement providers to ensure continued access to sufficient high-quality placements, they did not reflect on the nature of their relationships with their practice placement providers. The visitors explored the type of practice placement providers they have relationships with and their contribution to ensuring the effective delivery of the programmes. It is important for the education provider to reflect on the effectiveness of their ongoing relationships with practice placement providers and how these are maintained.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area 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 visitors noted the additional reflections the education provider submitted with regards to the practice placement providers they engage with and nature of their relationships. For example, they explained how they engage with, and provided support to, placement providers by forming a community of Art Therapy clinical supervisors to provide clinical supervision in this area. Regular engagements with placement partners enabled them to build close relationships and maintain effective channels of communication. They also hosted placement meetings with clinical supervisors to provide a snapshot of the status of the placement experience cycle. This has been essential in enabling placement providers to

understand the governance of the education provider's programmes and the accountability processes they follow.

Practice placement providers are involved in programme planning which contributes to ensuring learners have the skills and knowledge to work in clinical environments. They explained how their Northwest Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) Education group is made up of programme leaders from all over the Northwest region including staff from NHS England, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the General Pharmaceutical council. Through this exploration, the visitors do not have any further concerns about this area.

Quality theme 2 – how practice educators' feedback is used to ensure the quality of programme

Area for further exploration: From the portfolio, we noted the education provider's reflection about the importance they place on feedback from practice educators. Although they have shown there are regular engagements with practice educators, they did not provide any reflections on themes arising from the feedback gathered through these engagements. The visitors were therefore unable to identify how the feedback is used to effectively monitor and review the performance of learners and provide support when required. The visitors therefore sought reflections from the education provider to show how they communicate and take actions based on the feedback from practice educators.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area 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 visitors noted the additional information submitted by the education provider within which they reflected on the actions they have taken based on practice educator's feedback on all their programmes. They stated how, in response to a request for further support in providing placements for learners, they created a Placement Provider's Handbook and additional information about supporting learners in their placement experiences. For some programmes, each learner was allocated their own practice educator who was the primary contact with the academic assessor. For their Nutrition and Dietetics programme, the education provider submitted detailed reflections of the specific actions they took in response to practice educator's feedback. For example, they changed their method of training back from online learning to face to face based on practice educator's feedback. The visitors agreed the education provider had satisfactorily addressed the concerns they had with regards to how practice educators' feedback was used.

Quality theme 3 – explanation on the roles and contributions of service users and carers on their programmes.

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted how the education provider submitted limited reflections to show how service users and carers are involved across programmes. For example, they did not provide any reflections about their processes for considering and taking appropriate actions in response to service users and carers feedback. The visitors decided to explore what the next plans were

to evaluate service users and carers feedback because it is important for the education provider to recognise their value to their programmes

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area 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 visitors noted the updated information the education provider submitted explaining the roles of service users and carers across all programmes. They visitors noted how service users and carers regularly provide feedback to programmes teams and how they are involved in programme planning and design of new programmes. The education provider further explained the service user's role in teaching and confirmed they are part of part of assessment teams. The stated they valued the input of service users and carers in providing feedback to learners. Their opinion and feedback contributed to ensuring realism and quality within their programmes. Service users and carers have opportunities to provide feedback to learners on their communication and professionalism as required. The visitors were satisfied with the updated reflections the education provider submitted. Through their exploration, the education provider satisfactorily reflected on the role of service user's and carers on their programmes.

Quality theme 4 –impact of new faculty structure on future planning

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the education provider reflected on medium to long terms challenges to their provisions within their submission. These reflections showed the expected changes the new faculty structure will have but they have not provided reflections on the potential challenges and opportunities they have identified. The visitors decided to explore how they education provider had reflected on how the new faculty would address the future medium and long term challenges and opportunities they had identified. The new faculty structure is a significant change which will impact the way HCPC programmes are delivered, so it is important for the education provider to reflect on its future impact on their programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this area 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 visitors noted the additional reflections submitted by the education provider with regards to the impact of the new faculty structure. They stated how, situating all regulated provisions within the new faculty structure, will place them in a stronger position to address the identified challenges. For example, they expect the new structure to help address the financial and availability of placement issues as they aim to grow learner numbers across all the programmes. As part of the new faculty, they expect to be able to build stronger communities of practice and minimise the increased resource requirements to support larger cohorts. They reflected on how, although the pressure on placement capacity is an area of risk, the new faculty structure could provide opportunities. This would be in

the form of the ability to deliver more authentic learning environment by replicating the integrated health and social care systems learners will work upon graduation.

In addition, they reflected on the opportunities to improve the quality of education and patient safety by having a unified approach to managing their placement provider relationships with greater efficiency. The single faculty will make it easier for them to develop and enhance their interprofessional learning proposition, including their approach to simulation. The visitors agreed the educator provider have satisfactorily addressed their concerns in this area. They have shown they considered the long-term impact of the new faculty structure on the future of their HCPC programmes.

Section 4: Findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Resourcing, including financial stability** –
  - The education provider reflected on the challenges they faced during the review period. This included the challenges associated with recruitment of learners. They reflected and recognised how this could lead to the erosion of financial stability because of under-recruitment-inflation. Additionally steady decline of learner numbers could lead to a trend and affect programme stability.
  - We found them to have detailed a clear plan for their next steps listed with major changes in restructuring and efficiencies. This included a streamlining of administrative aspects as well as using data and quality metrics to make informed decisions.
  - The visitors agreed the education provider had performed well in this area with clear and robust systems managing their provision. The education provider has provided appropriate reflections on the challenges with recruiting learners and have explained their actions to address these challenges. We therefore are referring the matter of low learner numbers to their next performance review.
- **Partnerships with other organisations** –
  - The education provider discussed how they enjoyed a good relationship with their partners, including practice partners, commissioners, and NHS England (formerly Health Education England). These partnerships work to ensure that learners benefit from a high-quality learning experience both at the education provider and whilst on placement. They also reflected on the challenges faced by availability of placements and discussed the dedicated support office they have in place to help manage this.

- o They also noted the reflection of how the development of other programmes within the region has had an impact upon placement capacity. The education provider confirmed they still have capacity for additional learners given the reduced numbers compared to approved learner numbers. The visitors also noted how the education provider has partners in place and systems to manage these partnerships.
  - o Following this the visitors found the education provider to have responded to their queries and to have demonstrated how they engage with their partners. They noted regular engagements with placement partners occur and enable them to build close relationships and maintain effective channels of communication.
  - o We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Academic and placement quality** –
  - o The education provider reflected on the various mechanisms they have in place to assess and ensure academic and placement quality.
  - o Since the introduction of the Office for Students (OfS), their model of quality management has moved towards a risk-assessment and proportionality approach. Academic quality and standards are monitored, maintained, and enhanced through their Continuous Monitoring of Enhancement (CME) process. This includes learner feedback, assessment outcomes, graduate outcomes data and external examiner reports. They also reflected on the impact of their revised approach to monitoring academic quality because it has demonstrated levels of continuation and completion were above the threshold set by the OfS.
  - o The education provider reflected on how they are moving to monitor quality in placements by using the InPlace system and managing learner evaluation of placements. They make learners aware of the importance of evaluating their placement experience to enable identification to address concerns with practice educators and share good practice. They explained how they use findings from audits and learner feedback and have effective engagement with Practice Education Facilitators.
  - o The visitors found the providers reflection to be very detailed in terms of academic quality. They were honest about the mixed set of indicators and the fact they are currently implementing a mid-term review process. They also reflected well on the mix of methods in evaluating placement quality.
  - o We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Interprofessional education** –
  - o The education provider has reflected on how interprofessional education (IPE) is featured across their provision. The systems in place for IPE enabled them to engage with a range of different professions such as nurses, midwives, paramedics, and podiatrists.
  - o We noted they listed interprofessional education as a challenge. However, we found a range of opportunities for interprofessional education from other Allied Health Professions (AHPs). Their reflections also suggest events are in place to support inter-disciplinary opportunities from all their programmes. We also noted the provider is

considering exploring further IPE opportunities and develop this area going forward.
- o The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflections to IPE. They agreed the information outlines how IPE was effectively embedded in the curricula and clearly demonstrated inter-professionalism. They also suggested how interprofessional education from AHPs in non-medical programmes could be an opportunity rather than a challenge as reported by the education provider.
- o We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Service users and carers** –
  - o The education provider reflected on how the involvement of services users and carers in all stages of all their programmes is an important aspect of their provision. Service users and carers are involved in programme design, delivery, and assessment. They reflected how it was conducted on a programme level. This means they have not consistently evaluated the benefit of these integrations across all programmes.
  - o The education provider is planning to consolidate all their programmes into a single faculty, the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Society. This will allow a more consistent approach to service user involvement to continue and to re-evaluate their current approach. They plan to establish a more systematic approach to gathering feedback on a programmatic basis and thereby holistically measuring the benefit of service user and learner interactions.
  - o The visitors and the service user's expert advisor on this case found limited reflections in the submission to show how service user and carer involvement is implemented across all programmes. The visitors also noted the honest reflections regarding the lack of consistency in assessing / evaluating service user and carer involvement. They also noted the education provider has plans to develop this area going forward. This was explored further as part of quality theme three.
  - o Based on the additional information explored through the quality activity process and those in the portfolio, the visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area. They have effectively reflected on the role and impact service users and carers have on the development, delivery, and assessments of their programmes.
- **Equality and diversity** –
  - o The education provider discussed how equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies are situated and monitored at the institutional level. These policies are discussed at their Equality Forum which is also responsible for undertaking monitoring of the long-term impact of these policies. The Equality Forum is supported in its work by specialist interest groups covering disability, LGBTQ+, networks for women, parents, carers, menopause, race and culture and men. They have also discussed how their students' union has several societies dedicated to EDI. The impact of these policies is monitored through data analysis and presentation to the relevant group(s) and an annual equality report is produced which highlights the work of these groups.

- o The education provider discussed how the new Faculty of Health, Medicine and Society is represented in all the groups that monitor the impact of EDI policies. Representatives report back through the Faculty Board of Study or other committees as appropriate. The new faculty is also working to strengthen involvement in this area and considerations around the recruitment and involvement of a diverse range of service users and carers in programme design, learning, teaching and assessment. The education provider submitted additional information about the potential impact of the consolidation of the faculty. The updates outlined how all programmes have processes and policies in place to continue to meet the equality and diversity requirements.
  - o Following this expansion, the visitors were assured that all policies in place are appropriate and that the provider has plans in place to develop and enhance EDI.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with the education providers approach to this area.
- **Horizon scanning** –
  - o The education provider has discussed how the financial constraints previously identified presented the greatest challenge in the near-term. This is further compounded by steady or decrease in recruitment in their programmes except for the Non-medical Prescribing programme. There has also been a noted increase in the complexity of these cohorts, meaning learner cohorts have greater support needs including general wellbeing, mental health support, financial challenges etc.
  - o Their new Faculty of Health, Medicine and Society will bring together provision that was previously dispersed across different faculties. They expect the new integrated structure will create enhanced opportunities for inter-professional collaboration in teaching, learning, research, and knowledge transfer. They aim to consolidate and realise the efficiencies of collaborative working. The new Faculty of Health, Medicine and Society is intended to mirror the approach taken by local employers' stakeholders who have been reorganised into the integrated health and social care systems.
  - o The visitors found the reflections to be limited and primarily centred on the introduction of the new faculty. But also noted the plans they have in place and that they are planning to conduct an internal review. They also found the provider to have clearly articulated the benefits of their new faculty and this new faculty to be a key benefit of their ongoing development. This was explored further through quality activity four.
  - o The visitors found this response to fully respond to their questions. They found this response to be detailed and to articulate the benefits of their new faculty structure. The visitors are satisfied with the response and the providers performance in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
  - o The education provider stated that programme teams undertook extensive activities to ensure their provision meets the revised SOPs. Work is ongoing to undertake a gap analysis by mapping current programme content and delivery plans to the revised standards. The outcome of this analysis will support the identification of areas that need to be altered or developed to ensure that the new SOPs are fully embedded by September 2023.
  - o They have also discussed how their initial evaluations suggests that much of their provision is already adhering to the new standards and they will work to highlight these to learners. The SOPs are ingrained across their provision, but most programme teams have chosen to continue to focus explicit development within practice learning modules and elements.
  - o The visitors found there to be a comprehensive plan to implement the revised SOPs and to have these in place by September 2023. They found clear reflections on how the implementation of the revised SOPs will be assessed through the Competence framework. They found the education provider to demonstrate methods of training for clinical educators and SOPs integration in future programme development.
  - o The visitors are satisfied with the education providers plans to implement the revised standards.
- **Impact of COVID-19 –**
  - o The education provider reflected on the impact the pandemic had on them as an institution and on their learners. For example, learners were impacted due to the disruption in placements.
  - o The education provider developed new mechanisms and novel ways of delivering their provision in a pandemic-friendly way. This built on developments that began before the pandemic but became necessary due to restrictions. They noted the increase in learners reporting mental health concerns during the period, this was made more challenging because some learners had to undertake placements far away from their support networks.
  - o They took the opportunity to continue to make changes to their methods of delivery which benefited learners. They developed conference style days which helped to enhance their interprofessional education offerings. Programmes were able to exploit existing digital tools to support learners. They reflected on how using virtual learning environment and Microsoft teams, they were able to offer additional support to learners with either physical or mental health issues. They plan to retain the enhanced elements of technology to enable the programmes to be accessible to the widest possible audience.
  - o The visitors found a clear reflection on the impact, the challenges, and the legacy of the pandemic. They found thoughtful reflections of both the negatives and positive opportunities that came about because of the actions taken in the pandemic. They noted highlights on the use of technology and the need for closer observation and monitoring on learners with additional health and well-being needs.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with the providers approach to this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**

- o The education provider's reflections in this area highlight how their response to the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted their approach to using technology. A significant challenge had been with regards to rebalancing their approach to using the benefits of technology without losing the strength of the community learning based on in-person relationships.
  - o They explained how their Non-medical Prescribing team moved to a fully interactive online version of the Practice Assessment Record & Evaluation system (PARE) competency document.
  - o They also invested in IT equipment so learners can experience the latest practice within clinical areas. The facilities allowed them to simulate the ward, clinic, and community healthcare settings. They are working to enhance simulation to grow learner confidence and to alleviate pressure on placement. They plan to continue to invest in the development of the virtual reality capabilities.
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider is performing well in this area. They noted the specific examples of systems and apps used and use of simulation which are aiming to improve and increase usage in the future.
  - o The visitors were satisfied with the providers approach to this area.
- **Apprenticeships** –
  - o The education provider reflected on the approach they have taken towards higher and degree apprenticeships. A decision was made to grow the provision only when they believe they can address the real skills gaps in their local economy and have sufficient academic strength and capacity.
  - o They reflected on how one of the outcomes of their Ofsted inspection in 2022 highlighted how leaders have a clear rationale for the apprenticeships they offer. They will continue to work to fully develop and implement a new framework for apprenticeship provisions.
  - o In relation to health and social care subjects, the education provider has expanded into higher and degree apprenticeships only when they have been directly approached and commissioned by local employers. These have not included HCPC regulated programmes. They will continue to maintain communication with their local employers to review demand for specific programmes in the future.
    The visitors agreed the education is performing satisfactorily in this area. They noted the caution in growing apprenticeships only when they have sufficient academic strength and capacity.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education** –
  - o The education provider gave a detailed reflection on the challenges they experienced because of the change in their relationship with the Quality Assurance Agency. This change was in response to the decision by the Office for Students to remove the Code from the list of

sectors recognised standards. They have not been subject to any assessment against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. They noted a significant challenge had been to determine the extent to which their quality management model should align with the UK Quality Code.

- o The reflected on how they considered the different requirements of the process-centric nature of the Quality Code and the outcomes-based regulation of the OfS. They chose to align to the OfS conditions of registration data-led, risk-based model which has led to the development of new processes such as the continuous monitoring of enhancement process. They plan to continue to refer to the Quality Code as a useful reference point and using their new proportionate and risk-based model of quality management. Features of the quality code which would be considered as good practice will continue to be applied in their new model.
- o The visitors agreed the education provider reflected well in this area.
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies** –
  - o The education provider reflected on the actions they took when they became aware of the poor Care Quality Commission (CQC) outcome at one their placement provider partners. The placement provider had received an inadequate rating and the education provider worked with them to provide support for their action plans.
  - o They provided reflections on their approach of monitoring the performance of practice education providers. A dedicated member of staff within their Practice Learning Support Office review CQC reports of placement providers. Poor outcomes are escalated to the practice support team who work with placement providers to review action plans and implement support for practice learning. They highlighted the benefits of the proactive approach and regular engagement with practice educators which meant there was no negative impact on learners through pausing or removal from the placement.
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider is performing well in this area. They stated how the education provider presented an honest review of the challenges they faced in terms of a poor CQC inspection for one of their placement providers. They highlighted it is good they have systems in place to review this area and to having a dedicated person to review CQC reports and escalate insights from these.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes** –
  - o The education provider reflected on the NSS in the corresponding data sections. They acknowledged their performance being below the benchmark and below their own aspirations. They outlined that this score does reflect all learners and not just those on approved programmes. They also reflected on the impact of the pandemic that has led to lower levels of learner satisfaction.
  - o The visitors were satisfied the education provider is responding to and continuing the meet the OfS conditions.
  - o They also noted that the education provider has regularly exceeded the benchmark in other years and have plans to address current scores.
  - o We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Office for Students monitoring** –

- o The education provider reflected on their engagement with the Office for Students (OfS) and confirmed they have not been subject to specific assessments during the review period. They were receptive to the outcomes-based regulation and engaged with the OfS consultations to the revised B conditions. They developed a quality compliance framework (QCF) which is mapped against each of the B conditions of OfS. A new approach to quality monitoring was developed to ensure consistent approach to the implementation of the QCF.
  - o They also reflected on how their alignment with OfS means they no longer actively align their quality management framework with it. They plan to implement a new Internal Quality Assessment (IQA) process which focus on the areas of risk within the education provider's academic portfolio. Programmes subject to regulation by the OfS and other regulators will be subject to IQA process.
  - o The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area. They have effectively reflected on how they engage with the office for students.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies** –
  - o The education provider reflected on their engagement with multiple regulators such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the British Association of Arts Therapist. There is senior oversight from faculty leadership to ensure effective governance to manage the complex suite of programmes requiring various levels of governance to ensure compliance with professional standards.
  - o The reflected on how their new faculty structure has provided an opportunity to further enhance the quality and governance for support for regulated programmes through the establishment of a faculty registrar. Who will work across all professionally regulated programmes providing a consistent approach to governance arrangements. There are plans to use feedback from professional body submissions to identify any shared themes and plan actions accordingly.
  - o The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area. They have shown how they effectively engage with relevant professional bodies.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Curriculum development** –
  - o The education provider submitted a detailed reflection of their performance in this area. They highlighted challenges they experienced, and the actions taken to address them. A key area of focus was in relation to implementation of the revised SOPs in Nutrition and Dietetic which has been addressed above.
  - o The education provider reflected well on the actions they took to ensure they meet the accreditation requirements for the British Dietetics Association (BDA). They worked with the BDA to review their

programmes, module descriptors and assessment to ensure they have been mapped the BDA curriculum.

- o The visitors agreed the education provider performed well in this area. They presented clear reflections on how the implementation of the revised SOPs will be assessed through the competence framework. They noted their explanation for reviewing and developing the curriculum of their individual programmes.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance** –
  - o The education provider adequately explained how each of their programmes meet individual professional body guidance. They explained how they revalidated their Nutrition and Dietetics programme to meet the requirements of the British Dietetic Association (BDA) in 2020. They have processes in place to manage professional body monitoring and how best to identify opportunities for using new technology and further use of simulation.
  - o Their processes enabled extensive mapping exercises to ensure their curriculums are mapped to updated standards. They continuously monitor regulatory body changes, workforce, and sector changes to ensure curriculums are current. They noted they have positive relationships with their professional bodies and were able to have early conversations about changes and updates.
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider is performing well in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning** –
  - o The education provider reflected on challenges in the management of availability of practice-based learning. They made developments to ensure there is sufficient placement capacity for learners across the region. They explained how this has been achieved by reducing pressure on NHS Trusts in terms of the length of placements and using group learning models.
  - o They plan to continue to develop their use of group learning models and innovative models of supervisions to assist with placement capacity. They are also considering opportunities to develop additional placement capacity within private, independent, and voluntary organisations. They expect the new faculty structure to enable their programmes to benefit from the amalgamation of cohesive practice learning infrastructure.
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider is performing well in this area. Their reflections in this area were effectively linked to their earlier reflections around placements.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Learners** –
  - o The education provider stated it had been challenging gaining learner feedback in an organised and formal manner during the review period. The learner feedback collected was scrutinised and feedback was

provided to the learner group via Moodle. Learners' voices are represented through meetings which are recorded. learners are represented at programme committees and faculty boards of study.

- o Based on a request for further clarification from the visitors, the education provider submitted further reflections about feedback received from the NETS. The education provider stated it was difficult to analyse specific feedback from NETS for their three professional programmes. This is due to the generic feedback received from all regions. They confirmed programme team use NSS data and programme level evaluations to produce continuous monitoring for enhancement action plans. They reflected this approach was preferable to using NETS data due to the issues with specificity.
- o The education provider stated they had received a total of three formal complaints over the past two academic years and there are no connected themes. They reflected on the importance of the learner voice and introduced a drop-in 'student voice' meeting for part-time learners who required a different method to share their feedback.
- o The visitors noted the education provider's reflections in this area and their use of the NETS to inform their practices. They found the reflections to be generic and they are unable to gain details on what exact issues were encountered. They were unable to determine what specific issues the learners were feeding back. The visitors would recommend a more robust approach to this area in future performance reviews. We shall therefore factor this into our ongoing recommendation for a future monitoring period.

- **Practice placement educators** –
    - o The visitors noted the education provider submitted limited reflections in this area. The education provider highlighted the importance of feedback from quality educators to ensure quality but did not reflect on any themes of feedback from practice educators. The focus of their reflections was based around their engagement with practice educators and the information they provided them. The narrative presented in the portfolio indicated the education provider has positive relationships and regular engagement with practice providers. This was explored further through quality activity one.
    - o The education provider submitted a more detailed submission to in response to the visitor's feedback. The explained how they created a Placement Provider's handbook in response to requests from practice educators request for guidance on how to better support learners. They addressed the poor communications with learners on placements to ensure lines of communication remain open and active throughout placement. This has resulted in placement providers being able to provide feedback more easily especially around professional conduct.
    - o The visitors agreed the education provider is performing well in this area. The additional reflections they provided showed they have processes in place to communicate effectively with practice providers. This enabled them to be address any issues quickly and identify opportunities.
- **External examiners** –
    - o The education provider's reflection shows the external examiner feedback they have received during the review period has been

positive. The external examiners provided confirmation about standards being met and identified helpful areas for enhancements. The education provider reflected on the changes which have been made in delivery assessment to deal with the impact of the pandemic.

- o The education provider demonstrated how they consider and apply the feedback from external examiners. The external examiner reports identified several good areas of good practice were identified during this review period. The education provider specifically requested for external examiners to identify particularly good and strong practice which were then shared with colleagues.
- o The education provider informed us they were reviewing their approach towards external examining as part of a renewal of its quality management systems. Their reflections demonstrated the rationale and expected impact of this review. They confirmed the external examiners will continue to have oversight of quality and standards and their work will be augmented by the appointment of the department based external quality advisor.
- o The visitors agreed the education provider is performing well in this area because it is clear they are reflecting appropriately and making changes where required. We note the ongoing development / review in this area and are referring this development to be reviewed at the performance review.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

<u>Data and reflections</u>

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Non-continuation rates:**
  - o The education provider reflected on how there was a noticeable decline in the number of learners not continuing since the pandemic. They noted how this decline coincided with the increase in declarations from learners of mental health, physical health, and other wellbeing issues. They increased the support available to learners facing these issues by introducing an institution wide midterm review process. This aims to ensure all programme teams review data on learner engagement. They aim to identify learners who appear to be at risk of becoming disengaged from their studies. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflections in this area. They agreed a good reflection have been provided with clear reasoning for their non-continuation rates and how they planned to address the issues.
- **Graduate outcomes:**
  - o The education provider stated they were pleased with their provision exceeding the benchmark for employment/further study. They reflected on how this underlines the inherent value of their programmes and how it gives graduates the knowledge and skills employers are seeking. They are aware of the competition in the jobs market and the increasing complexity of their cohorts. In response, they aim to focus

on future career prospects within the curriculum. The visitors agreed the education provider submitted good reflections in this area. They showed clear links to course strengths and continuing employment but are still aware of potential challenges.

- **Teaching quality:**
  - The education provider acknowledges how the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) methodology has been altered, placing equal weight between the learner experience, outcome metrics. The education provider is engaging with the new TEF process and has made a submission for review. They have openly reflected on the challenges they faced, including the lack of a shared methodology for evaluating the impact of their initiatives to enhance learning, teaching and assessment.
  - The education provider reflected on how they are broadly in line or above the benchmark factors in the TEF data published by the OfS. They acknowledged how the new methodology introduced by OfS places greater weight on evidence of impact than in the previous exercises. They stated how their continuous monitoring and enhancement process emphasis on quality improvement action planning, suits this new approach well.
  - The visitors noted the education provider's open and honest reflections and acknowledgement of the challenges they faced.
  - We are satisfied in the education provider's performance in this area.
- **Learner satisfaction:**
  - The education provider reflected on why their learner satisfaction for the provision was below the benchmark. The noted how their whole institution experience was disrupted by the pandemic. They noted there is a need to improve the satisfaction of their undergraduate cohort and highlighted the specific challenges they needed to address.
  - Most of the institutions provision is at a post graduate level and learner satisfaction is not included in the NSS data. Through their reflections, they explained how they are working on the points highlighted throughout this submission to improve learner satisfaction. One of the key changes they are making is strengthening the 'student voice' systems through the implementation of their student Engagement Strategy.
  - The visitors noted the education provider's score against the benchmark and their open and honest reflections on this. We found the inclusion of the PTES (Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey) positive. We were satisfied the education provider is working towards improving their scores in this area, but also acknowledge work needs to be done in this area. We are therefore referring this matter to the next performance review.
- **Programme level data:**
  - The education provider outlined how their staff/learner ratio is calculated based on full time equivalence across all provisions. The total number of learners on the Non-Medical Prescribing include those who are regulated by other health regulators. They reflected on how a key challenge was balancing staffing resources during a period of recruitment challenges. They had to meet the requirements of multiple regulators and accrediting bodies. They outlined a key success as their

ability to maintain a stable staffing base over the review period despite these challenges. They plan to develop a forward academic portfolio plan for the next three years which will set the direction of travel for their programmes.

o The visitors note the educations provider's plans to utilise visiting lecturers as a means for improving their scores. They also note their open and honest reflections on the score and the plan they have in place to improve scores. We are satisfied the education provider is working towards improving their scores in this area, but also acknowledge work needs to be done in this area. We also recommend the education provider provide greater detail and clarify what they mean by developing a forward academic portfolio plan.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Lower than expected learner numbers

Summary of issue: We note from the education provider's submission that they have experienced low levels of learner recruitment in recent years. This means that the current learner numbers are below the expect number the programmes are resourced for. This could impact longer term programme sustainability as the education provider may struggle to recruit sufficient learners. We note the provider is working on reversing this trend and have introduced a new single faculty structure that will help with this. We therefore recommend the education provider continues with the measures they have out in place. We are referring this to their next Performance Review. We recommend the education provider uses the ongoing monitoring period to implement measures and reflect on the outcome of these measures at their next review.

Low levels of learner satisfaction

Summary of issue: The data points indicate that the education provider is performing below the benchmark regarding learner satisfaction. We collect data regarding our education providers on an annual basis. The national student survey conducted by the office for students indicates that the education provider scored 56.2% satisfaction of their provision, this is below the benchmark of 75%. The education providers expand approach to utilising other data sources such as the NETs survey. They do recognise this score, but have limited reflections on this area. The provider has acknowledged that more work is needed and is working to improve their scores here. We are therefore encouraging the education provider to continue working to improve their scores here and to reflect on their progress at their next

review. We also recommend the education provider reflects more deeply on their NETs score at their next performance review

Introduction of the new combined faculty

Summary of issue: The education provider has discussed their plans to introduce a joint faculty that will contain all their HCPC-approved programmes. They have also discussed how this will help address issues around learner recruitment, resourcing, practise-based learning capacity etc. The education provider should also explain the impact this will have on their approach to managing engagement with Service Users and Carers. We are referring this matter to their next performance review. We recommend that the education provider monitor the implementation of the new faculty against their objectives for this and then reflect on its success. The ongoing monitoring period recommended by the visitors will provide sufficient time for this implementation and to receive feedback on its implementation.

Review of the education providers internal quality management systems

Summary of issue: We note from the education providers reflections that they are reviewing their quality management systems as part of their internal renewal processes. This will include reviewing their approach towards involving external examiners in their processes. This development remains ongoing, and we recommend the education provider continues this development and reflect on this as part of their next performance review.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:
- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year

Reason for next engagement recommendation
- Internal stakeholder engagement
  - The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider include learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations, external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
  - The education provider engaged with several relevant professional and regulatory bodies. These included the Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Pharmaceutical Council, The British Association of Arts Therapists and British Dietetic Association. They considered the findings of these bodies in improving their provision.
  - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply
  - Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period.

- What the data is telling us:
  - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considered data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.
- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a 4-year monitoring period is:
  - We want to acknowledge the good work the education provider has done across the review period and acknowledge their engagement across this process. There are several areas for development that the education provider has identified and areas they are working to improve. This includes working to increase learner numbers across their provision and to improve learner satisfaction scores. This future review period will give the education provider adequate time to implement action plans and evaluate the results of changes to reflect upon in their next performance review.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Nutrition and Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/09/2005
MA Art Therapy	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Art therapy		01/02/2011
MA Art Therapy	PT (Part time)	Arts therapist	Art therapy		01/02/2011
MSc Nutrition and Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/08/2018
Non-Medical Prescribing (Independent)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2017
Non-Medical Prescribing (Supplementary)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2017
Pg Dip Nutrition and Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/08/2018