Approval process report

AECC University College, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Dietetics, Podiatry 2022-23

**Executive summary**

We reviewed these newly proposed programmes through our approval process, to ensure they met our regulatory standards.

The report covers our review of the MSc Occupational Therapy; MSc Speech and Language Therapy; MSc Dietetics, and MSc Podiatry programmes at AECC University College. The visitors explored several areas with the education provider through our review, and they demonstrated it met our standards through documentary evidence and further review.

The visitors are satisfied all learners upon completion of these programmes would meet the standards for proficiency for occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, dietitian and chiropodist / podiatrist. This report will be submitted to the meeting of the Education and Training Panel on 30 November 2022.

Throughout review, we did not set any conditions on approving the programmes. This report will now be considered by our Education and Training Panel who will make a final decision on programme approval.

# Included within this report

# Section 1: About this assessment

**About us**

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance, and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure 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.

**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, if 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. 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. 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:

| Patricia McClure | Lead Visitor, Occupational therapist |
| Lucy Myers | Lead Visitor, Speech and language therapist |
| Thomas Butler | Support Visitor, Dietitian |
| Emma Supple | Support Visitor, Chiropodist / Podiatrist |
| Kabir Kareem | Education Manager |

## Section 2: Institution-level assessment

**The education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers two HCPC-approved programmes across two professions. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2020.

AECC University College is a specialist health sciences University with an academic and clinical learning environment with a 'strategic goal to design and deliver courses which will support local NHS workforce planning'. The education provider stated that "currently, the South West region is at risk of having insufficient podiatrists and dietitians to support hospital and community services. This is a particular concern in

Dorset where a high number of current registrants are anticipated to retire in the next 5 years".

It has experience of delivering pre-registration chiropractic and post-registration imaging degrees (neither of which are HCPC-regulated areas) and more recently undergraduate radiography (diagnostic and therapeutic), sport & exercise science, sport rehabilitation, clinical exercise and psychology programmes. In addition, the University College has also recently added pre-registration physiotherapy to the postgraduate portfolio.

**Practice areas delivered by the education provider**

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas regulated by the HCPC. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

|  | Practice area | Delivery level | | Approved since |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pre-registration** | Physiotherapist | ☐Undergraduate | ☒Postgraduate | 2021 |
| | Radiographer | ☒Undergraduate | ☐Postgraduate | 2020 |

**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 | 105 | 105 | 2022 | The enrolled number of learners across all HCPC approved programmes is the same as the approved intended number we have on our records. |
| Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing | 8% | 4% | 2021 | The percentage of learners not continuing is less than the benchmark. This suggests learners are satisfied with their studies.<br>This data indicated this is an area of good performance. |
| Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in | 93% | 100% | 2019-2020 | The percentage in employment or further study is higher than the benchmark. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| employment / further study | | | | The 100% value is based on 50% of learners who provided a response to the HESA graduate outcomes survey. Half of the learners surveyed did not provide a response<br><br>Based on the response rate, the data shows all the learners who completed their learning and responded to the survey make significant progress after their studies. |
| Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award | N/A | Silver | 2017 | Awarded in 2017. Silver indicates there is room for improvement, but also worth noting this award was several years ago and the TEF replacement has not yet been introduced would provide an alternative score. Silver is also a positive score and TEF states this shows a 'high quality' of teaching and the provider 'consistently exceeds rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education. |
| National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27) | 73.2% | 54.8% | 2021 | The education provider low scores were not specifically explored by the visitors during their review.<br><br>The education provider is due to make a submission as part of their Performance Review for the 2023-24 academic year. We will review these scores as part of process. |

**Outcomes from 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.

Admissions

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**
- **Information for applicants**- There are institution level policies which will apply to all applicants. There are programme specific webpages which contain the information about entry requirements. Each programme webpage and applicant information pack provide information for applicants on the health requirements of learners, including vaccination and occupational health assessments. There is a specific policy which provides information about making an appeal or complaint in relation to an application to a course.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way which is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** – The policies are set at the institution level and will apply to all programmes. Information about English language proficiency together with English language details will be available on individual programme webpages. Information for applicants with disabilities and additional support needs are also available. Applicants' character will be assessed through the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate or National Police Certificate for those living outside of the UK.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** – The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy and procedure is set at the institution level and will apply to all programmes. This policy provides an explanation relating to the principles, definitions, credit allowances, and operational processes that should be followed in applications for the RPL. It also includes information about the key responsibilities for management and implementation of the policy, the implementation process, and the limits to the RPL.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is set at the institution level and will apply to all programmes. The education provider reports they are "committed to having a diverse and inclusive culture which offers equality and opportunity for all learners". The information submitted explains how policy contributes to "eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and promoting respectful relations". The policy sets out the education provider's ethos in support of equality in the areas of current legislation and highlights existing equality policies and schemes they adhere to.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None.

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]** –The course design framework is implemented at the institutional level and ensures programmes are delivered at the appropriate levels. It set out the procedures which should be followed for making modifications to the approved versions of programmes and subsequent reviews. The course consideration, approval and periodic review policy sets out the education provider's procedures for the approval of new programmes and periodic reviews of existing programmes. This policy was developed after due consideration of the UK Quality Code, considering the associated QAA Advice and Guidance.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Sustainability of provision** –The course consideration and review policy set out roles of committees and the senior management group for the approval of new programmes. They are responsible for reviewing and approving (where appropriate) the business case for proceeding with the development of a new programmes or continuing with an existing programme at the point of periodic review. The policy allows the education provider to be assured of the quality and viability of new or established programmes.
- There are processes to enable a thorough and robust costing process with detailed financial data to demonstrate the financial sustainability of the proposal. This also includes evidence of the resources necessary to support the programme have been identified and are available.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Effective programme delivery** – The education provider has an established formal management process to ensure the effective delivery of programmes. This approach will be implemented at the institutional level and will be applied to all the new programmes. Each programme has a programme steering group who meet regularly to discuss, develop, and deliver the programme action plan. They consider recommendations for programme modifications and make final recommendations to the relevant committees.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Effective staff management and development** – The education provider uses the "University College Staff Development Policy" for the management and development of staff. This applies at the institutional level. Programme leaders are line managed by the Head of School, who sits on the Senior Management Team and reports to the Board of Governors. The specific qualifications and experience are described as essential in the job description for all academic staff appointed to academic roles.
- As part of the commitment to ensuring learners are taught and guided by appropriately-qualified staff, all non-clinical academic staff are expected to

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

have, or be working towards, a PhD or other doctoral qualification. All new staff without teaching experience are encouraged to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching, or equivalent, and are supported to achieve recognition as a Fellow of Advance HE. They have also confirmed all staff are required to go through the annual appraisal process.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** – The policies used by the education provider for this area are applied at the institutional level. The consideration and approval of educational partnerships policy sets out how it considers, and if appropriate, approves prospective educational partners. This ensures that all programmes delivered in partnership with other institutions maintain appropriate academic standards and deliver a high quality student experience.
- The Senior Management Group is responsible for considering and approving the business case for all educational partnerships as a separate process to academic approval. The institution wide Practice-Placement policy outlines the requirement and expectations for programme teams involved in the organisation, approval, and ongoing management of placement learning.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**
- **Academic quality** – All programmes are initially approved through a thorough scrutiny process that includes input from external experts. Afterwards, all programmes undergo continuous monitoring, and programme leaders complete an annual monitoring report form annually.
- All programmes are reviewed at least every six years. The procedure is the same as for new programmes, but also includes consideration of a range of qualitative and quantitative monitoring data. The External Examiner policy sets out the policy and procedures relating to external examining by the education provider. This includes the appointment and induction of external examiners and their role and responsibilities.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** – The education provider has an institution-wide Placement policy which outlines the processes for the identification, approval, and ongoing monitoring of learners' practice placements. It sets out the overarching arrangements for managing learners concerns and whistleblowing. There is an emphasis on ensuring there are effective processes in place to support learners.

- At programme level, specific arrangements covering whistleblowing are included in each placement handbook. Learners are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the whistleblowing policies of their specific placement provider. Practice educators complete Continuous Professional Training to ensure the required knowledge, skills and experience are maintained while working with learners.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Learner involvement** – The education provider has processes and policies set at institutional level to enable learner involvement with programme development. The course design framework and course consideration policy include the institutional expectation for learners to be involved in the design process for new programmes. Learner representatives for each programme are members of the course steering committee. At institutional level, there is learner representation on all committees of the Academic Board and the Board of Governors. All learners are invited to complete mid-unit evaluations and an annual course experience survey to provide feedback at unit and course level.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Service user and carer involvement** – This is managed at the institutional levels via the Friends of the Clinic group. This group includes service-users who provide regular feedback on and input into the delivery of service at the education provider's clinic. The patient voice is collected through annual questionnaires and comment cards. Their feedback is reported directly to the Clinical Governance Group.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Learners

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**
- **Support** – The processes and policies used to manage learner support is set at the institutional level. There is a specific section within the Student Handbook which sets out the support which will be provided to learners. The placement policy which has been described above is also used to provide support to learners while on placements. The student complaints policy is applied at the institutional level and set out the support which will be provided to leaners who make complaints. It provides an explanation of the procedures for: progressing a complaint; outcomes; and key responsibilities.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Ongoing suitability** – Any concerns relating to the suitability of learners' conduct, character and health is managed at the institutional level using the

fitness to study and fitness to practise policies. These policies provide a framework in relation to the duty of care for students.

- A learner monitoring and wellbeing group meets regularly for each programme. They consider all matters related to individual learner progress including academic performance, skills attainment, attendance requirements, wellbeing, and attitudinal issues. This aims to: identify those learners who perform below the required standard or are in danger of doing so; make recommendations; and monitor outcomes.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** – Learners are introduced to the concepts of interprofessional learning and interprofessional practice at the start of the education provider's programmes. There is joint delivery of units across health profession-focused programmes to foster interprofessional education, and interprofessional learning forms a core part of the placement experiences of learners. This approach applies at the institutional level.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – The education provider's Equality and Diversity policy applies to all programmes. An institution wide equality diversity and inclusion policy is in place which is reviewed regularly. Top-level learner data is monitored annually through the Academic Standards and Quality Committee.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None**.

Assessment

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**
- **Objectivity** – The mechanisms in place to ensure assessment objectivity are set out in multiple institutional level policies. The appropriateness of assessment methods to test learning outcomes is considered as part of initial course consideration and approval. Assessment policies and procedures in place ensure objectivity, fairness, and reliability.
- The Setting and Scrutiny of Assessments Policy and Procedure sets out how assessments should be scrutinised to ensure the assessment process is valid and reliable, and that assessment documentation is error-free. This is implemented at school level.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Progression and achievement** – The course design framework, which operates institutionally, highlights the intermediate awards on degrees with

professional accreditation must not have titles that suggest the holder of such an award is eligible to register with the relevant professional body, and / or practise in that professional field.

- The assessment regulations operate institutionally and set out the requirements for progression and award. Where required, specific regulations are approved for individual programmes and included as separate sections within the regulations.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.
- **Appeals** – The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures is an institution wide policy and applies to all learners. This document sets out the policy under which learners may appeal against an academic decision, the grounds for appeal and the mechanism by which appeals will be considered. It sets out the processes for the management of appeal. Responsibility for the management and implementation of this policy and its procedures lies with the Academic Registrar.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs. We determined the proposed programmes would be managed in a way that is consistent with the definition of their institution.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

## Section 3: Programme-level assessment

**Programmes considered through this assessment**

| Programme name | Mode of study | Profession (including modality) / entitlement | Proposed learner number, and frequency | Proposed start date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MSc Occupational therapy (pre-registration | Full time | Occupational therapist | 24 learners, 1 cohort per year | January 2023 |
| MSc Speech and language therapy (pre-registration) | Full time | Speech and language therapist | 25 learners, 1 cohort per year | January 2023 |
| MSc Podiatry (Pre-registration) | Full time | Chiropodist / podiatrist | 30 learners, 1 cohort per year | January 2023 |
| MSc Dietetics (Pre-registration) | Full-time | Dietitian | 30 learners, 1 cohort per year | January 2023 |

**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.

Quality theme 1 – Collaboration with stakeholders

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors explored the effectiveness of the process which would enable an effective working relationship between the education provider and their stakeholders. Based on the information supplied in the provider's submission, we wanted to further explore how senior management engage with practice placement providers and different professional groups / partners. The visitors sought to understand the role and impact of relevant stakeholders with regards to the programme design and placement model.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. We thought evidence presented in this manner would be the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration with stakeholders.

**Outcomes of exploration:** We received further information about the education provider's approach to collaborating with relevant stakeholders. They explained the processes in place to ensure collaboration with stakeholders is effective, and the roles of the senior management team within this process. The senior management team manages contracts with relevant partners / NHS Trusts to ensure consistency in relationships with various stakeholders. This also involves liaising with Allied Health Professional Leads within Trusts.

The processes include meeting professional partners from NHS Trusts and Health Education England and as part of the stakeholder events to inform them of programme development. Professional partners sit on internal validation panels and have contributed to the programmes. The education provider also explained how Heads of Schools and Course Leaders meet and communicate regularly with course leads at other Higher Education Institutions locally and regionally. The visitors were satisfied with the information the education provider submitted which clarified how they collaborate with stakeholders. The considered the quality activities adequately addressed the issues raised.

Quality theme 2 – Ensuring placement capacity

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors explored the education provider's approach to ensuring capacity with placement providers to satisfy demand. The

information they reviewed did not sufficiently demonstrate how learners were allocated to different placement providers. As a result, we sought assurance from the education provider about how they will ensure placement capacity for learners. We also explored if the education provider has gained appropriate commitment with placement providers to ensure there will be sufficient placement capacity to satisfy demand. The visitors enquired about the high number of education providers who would be competing for the same placements for learners.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. On review of this information, the visitors requested further information so, we decided a virtual meeting between the visitors and the education provider would be the most appropriate way to clarify outstanding issues.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors explored the information around the education provider's processes and strategy for ensuring appropriate placement capacity each year. They saw the methods the education provider uses to identify the number of placements required and how they ensured learners placement needs would be met. Their strategy included working closely with Health Education England (both South East and South West) both in the initial scoping of the programmes and in the implementation of the programmes. This demonstrated the education provider's approach to making informed decisions when considering the impact of other education providers competing for the same placements for learners. The education provider explained how they gained commitment for placements with education placement providers through regular and ongoing discussions. They worked with the education placement providers to come to mutually beneficial agreements to fill placement slots.

The visitors were satisfied that evidence of agreed practice placement numbers was provided. The visitors are satisfied with the updates submitted by the education provider in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 3 – Staff numbers during learner placements

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors explored how the education provider will ensure there will be a suitable number of staff to support learners during their practice based learning. They wanted clarification about commitments from placement providers which would ensure there would be an appropriate number of appropriately experienced and qualified staff in the placement setting.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. On review of this information, the visitors requested further information so, it was decided a virtual meeting between the visitors and the education provider would be the most appropriate way to clarify outstanding issues

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider submitted a contract between themselves and placement providers which states "the placement provider will make appropriate and sufficient staff available to ensure learners receive an educationally

relevant experience through effective facilitation and support for learning and assessment during placements". This is an extract from the part of the contract which sets out the requirements for facilitating and supporting learners' learning and assessment on placement.

During the virtual meeting, the education provider supplied further assurances to the visitors about how they will ensure their learners are taught by qualified staff. They provided details of the supervisory models which will be used based on specific programmes. There will be an online package to prepare and train placement practitioners on the provider's expectations around placements. They will work closely with placement supervisors to ensure they know what is required of them, and they are able to support learners in achieving the learning outcomes. The visitors are satisfied with the updates submitted by the education provider in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 4 – Management of full-time block placement.

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors wanted to explore the education provider's processes for the management of the full time block placements to ensure learners gain a diverse range of placement experience. It was not clear from the information the education provider submitted specific modules will have one location or whether they would be split across several locations. There was a concern this may limit learner's opportunity to gain the required learning experience in each setting.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. On review of this information, the visitors requested further information so, it was decided a virtual meeting between the visitors and the education provider would be the most appropriate way to clarify outstanding issues

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors reviewed detailed explanations of the placement timescales which demonstrated how learners will have placements in at least three different areas. One day per week during the placement block will be for independent study / preparation or to attend campus for tutorials. The education provider suggested that longer full-time block placements would be split across several settings to provide the breadth and diversity of practice experience. The advantages and disadvantages of splitting the longer placement were discussed during the meeting. The potential difficulties this could pose for students were highlighted in terms of lack of opportunity to really consolidate their learning and develop their competence and confidence in a specific practice area.

The education provider confirmed placement tutor will ensure all students gain a diverse range of practice experience through allocation to a different practice specialty for each of their three placements.' The process includes enabling a personal tutor to monitor the range and diversity of each learner's practice experience to ensure the place of each learner's supports the achievement of the required learning outcomes. The visitors are satisfied with the updates submitted by

the education provider in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 5 – Support for learners while on placement.

**Area for further exploration**- The visitors explored how learners will be adequately supported during their full-time block placements. The information submitted by the education provider did not sufficiently demonstrate how learners will have access to required resources or student support services. They wanted to explore the processes the education provider has in place which will ensure all learners are able to access the information and support they need.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. We thought evidence presented in this manner would be the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration between the two parties.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors explored the explanation of how the education provider's processes would ensure learners are provided with adequate support while on placement. These include:
- practice educators attending training sessions on how to support and coach learners;
- learners attending regular tutorials and debriefings between block placements;
- learners meeting with clinical tutors halfway through their placements;
- regular monitoring of leaner's range and diversity of experience to ensure achievement of required learning outcomes.

The updates suggest the education provider has established process to support learner during their placements. They will also have continued access to resources such the library to access books, journals, and other reading materials. The visitors are satisfied with the updates submitted by the education provider in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 6 – Use of placement portfolios.

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors explored how placement portfolios would be used to sign off on learners' skills and competencies. It was not clear from the education provider's submission how the learners would be able to evidence and record achievement of learning outcomes, competencies, completed and passed hours of each placement.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. We thought evidence presented in this manner would be the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of collaboration between the two parties.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors explored the updates presented by the education provider which included details about the design of the portfolios. The education provider stated portfolios are designed to enable learners to evidence and record achievement of learning outcomes, competencies, and completed and passed hours for each placement. The also provided examples of what the portfolios contain, such as placement assessment paperwork, placement hours log and a reflective diary. The portfolios will consist mostly of written work, but some aspects could be submitted in other ways such as a reflective diary, a voice recording or a verbal presentation could be included, if requested, as a reasonable adjustment.

The visitors considered the education providers rationale for designing the portfolios which have been mapped to HCPC and the relevant professional body's standards. Practice educators understand how to use the portfolios to record and sign off the competencies the learners have passed. The visitors are satisfied with the updates submitted by the education provider in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 7 – Management of concerns around professional behaviour during placements.

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors explored whether the education provider can effectively identify and manage concerns around a learner's professional behaviour while on placement. We sought assurance the education provider has the processes to ensure only learners who meet the expectations of professional behaviour progress through the programmes.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. We thought evidence presented in this manner would be the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of collaboration between the two parties.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors explored the updates submitted by the education provider which explained the processes by which concerns around learners' professional behaviour is identified and managed. At programme level, concerns around professional behaviour during placements are identified via the escalating concerns procedure. Depending upon the nature, seriousness or patterns, learners may be referred to the Fitness for Practice Process. The process for managing concerns is set out in the Practice Handbook. The placement half-way check-in visits by the clinical tutors provides an opportunity to identify any concerns and set up processes to monitor learners' progress.

The visitors considered the policies and processes presented would identify, manage, and escalate concerns related to learners' professional behaviour, and these policies and processes were understood by those involved.

The visitors are satisfied with the updates submitted by the education provider in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 8 – Appointment of appropriate number of qualified staff.

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors wanted to explore how the education provider will ensure all the programmes are delivered by an appropriate number of qualified staff. We were concerned about the staffing levels for the programmes because it was not clear profession specific staff had been appointed for some of the programmes. The provider was asked to provide information to explain how they will ensure all programmes will be delivered the appropriate number of qualified staff.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. On review of this information, the visitors requested further information so, it was decided a virtual meeting between the visitors and the education provider would be the most appropriate way to clarify outstanding issues

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors explored the information the education provider submitted which explained their staffing plans for the next five years. These demonstrated how they will ensure the required number of staff are appointed to deliver all the programmes. The education provider explained:
- the specific staff roles they are in the process of recruiting to lead the delivery of specific programmes, along with support staff;
- they are engaging with local NHS Trusts input in specialist areas not covered by the core staffing team;
- the staffing plan which sets out the specific roles and responsibilities for the core teaching team.

The visitors agreed the current staffing plan is in line with other HCPC approved programmes being delivered by the education provider. They are satisfied with the additional information provided which demonstrated the programmes will be delivered by an appropriate number of skilled and qualified staff. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their queries.

Quality theme 9 – Resourcing for the programmes

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors explored how the programmes would be funded in the long term. The education provider's information relating to funding was focused on the initial start-up to show there are sufficient resources to support learners. From the information provided, the visitors did not understand the ongoing resourcing model for the programmes. The visitors sought assurances the education provider has a sustainable resources and funding plan for the programmes.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. We thought evidence presented in this manner would be the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of collaboration between the two parties.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors reviewed additional information explaining how the programme would be appropriately resourced. The education provider has

shown they have an appropriate strategy to ensure the long term sustainability of the programmes. The updates explained their funding plans and ongoing investments into physical resources to ensure the effective delivery of the programmes. These plans show their approach to provide physical resources to support learners as well as academic and pastoral support onsite and during practice placements.

Based on the information provided through the quality activity, the visitors are confident there will be sufficient resources to ensure the long term maintenance of the programmes.

<u>Quality theme 10 – Delivery of the standards of proficiency</u>

**Area for further exploration**: The visitors explored how the standards of proficiency (SOPs) are covered in the learning outcomes and assessments. They queried how the module descriptors would show how learners who complete the programmes can meet the SOPs for their profession. Based on the review of the documentation, they were unable to determine how the final assessments were mapped to the module content.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further**: We decided to explore this area by requesting an email response and further documentary evidence from the education provider. We thought evidence presented in this manner would be the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of collaboration between the two parties.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors explored the updated module descriptors and course specification for the programmes submitted by the education provider. These clearly articulated where the SOPs would be delivered and how learners would be assessed against relevant professions. The information suggests there are a relevant range of assessment methods used across the programmes to ensure graduates will meet the standards of proficiency for the profession. The education provider has considered the design of assessments which are an integral part of the learning process within the curriculum. This will enable learners to develop their skills and demonstrate their ability to meet the programme learning outcomes

The visitors agreed the updated information shows how learners can demonstrate how they meet the standards of proficiency for relevant parts of the Register. The visitors are satisfied the required information has been provided in response to their queries. They considered the quality activity has adequately addressed their queries.

## 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 which 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 we have evidence standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied no conditions were required to satisfy them 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. The provider set out their policies in place in their approval request form and baselining document.
  - No concerns raised in the executive-led stage 1 review.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - A significant proportion of this standard was reviewed and has been approved as part of the executive-led stage one review. The education provider explained the policies in their approval request form and baseline document.
  - Selection criteria are set at an appropriate level and include health and criminal records check as well as Disclosure Barring Service clearance.
  - The visitors agreed there is sufficient evidence to confirm the selection and entry criteria would allow learners to be able to meet our standards for registration upon completion of the programme.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - The visitors agreed there are appropriate processes in place to ensure the management processes of practice placements and collaboration with placement providers are effective. The education provider has adopted a centralised approach at senior management level to agree placement contracts to ensure sufficient placement provision.
  - Through the additional information provided through the quality activity process, the visitors are confident the education provider's staffing plans are appropriate. Sufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate the programmes will be delivered by appropriately qualified educators.
  - The visitors saw sufficient evidence which demonstrated the programmes, including the practice-based elements will be properly managed, and both staffing and physical resources will be adequate to ensure effective delivery. They are satisfied the standards within this SET have been met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - The visitors had some concerns about the accuracy of the mapping documents and requested further updates as part of the quality activity

process. They requested further information and clarification in relation to all four programmes to demonstrate how the modules align together.
- o Based on all the information reviewed by the visitors, they are confident the programmes ensure graduates can meet relevant standards of proficiency.
- o Overall, the visitors saw sufficient and appropriate evidence which would allow learners who complete the programme to meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills to be fit to practise. They are satisfied the standards within this SET have been met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o The visitors explored the education provider's processes and management of practice based learning as part of the quality activity which has been presented in section 3 of this report. The education provider has been able to demonstrate there are appropriate structures in place to ensure effective practice-based learning.
  - o Through the information provided through the quality activity process, they have been able to show there are appropriate structures for the management of practice based learning. There are provisions in place to accommodate learners who may need support in meeting the placement learning outcomes.
  - o There is evidence there are processes in place to ensure learners will be taught by appropriately qualified staff during their practice placements. There is evidence the education provider's staff will work closely with placement provider colleagues to ensure learners are able to meet the required learning outcomes. In addition, they will be HCPC registered practitioners.
  - o Overall, the visitors saw sufficient and appropriate evidence would allow learners who complete the programme to meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills to be fit to practise. They are satisfied the standards within this SET have been met.
- **SET 6: Assessment-**
  - o The visitors agreed the education provider has demonstrated through evidence there is an effective range of assessment methods used across the programmes to ensure graduates will meet the standards of proficiency. This should enable learners to develop their skills and abilities and demonstrate their ability to meet the programme learning outcomes.
  - o The assessment portfolios contain a range of documentation to demonstrate learners meet the expectations of professional behaviour. In addition, the information suggests there is a good range of relevant assessment methods identified across the modules within all programmes.
  - o The visitors saw sufficient evidence which demonstrated the standards within the SET area are met.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

## Section 5: Referrals

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

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process

**Recommendations**

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to 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.

## 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 all standards are met, and therefore the programmes should be approved.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

| Name | Mode of study | Profession | Modality | Annotation | First intake date |
|------|---------------|------------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) | FT (Full time) | Physiotherapist | | | 01/01/2021 |
| BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging) | FT (Full time) | Radiographer | Diagnostic radiographer | | 01/09/2020 |
| BSc (Hons) Radiography (Radiotherapy and Oncology) | FT (Full time) | Radiographer | Therapeutic radiographer | | 01/09/2020 |