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## Performance review process report

University of Suffolk, 2018 - 21

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### Executive summary

This is a report on the performance review process undertaken to review HCPC-approved provision at University of Suffolk. This assessment was undertaken as part of our quality assurance model in the 2021-22 academic year.

In our review, we considered that this institution is performing well, and visitors have recommended that the education provider should next be reviewed in four years' time, the 2025-26 academic year.

There are three referrals and issues to highlight. This report will now be considered by our Education and Training Panel on 28 March 2023 who will make the final decision on the review period.

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Previous consideration Not applicable. This is because this performance review process was not referred from another process.

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 .....  
Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2025-26 academic year.  
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## Section 1: About this assessment

### **About us**

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

This is a report on the 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:

Rachel Picton	Lead visitor, Diagnostic radiographer
Nicholas Haddington	Lead Visitor, Independent prescriber
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer
Tracey Samuel-Smith	Education Manager

## Section 2: About the education provider

### The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers seven HCPC approved programmes across three professions and two non-medical prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2006.

### 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
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2017
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2015
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2022
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2006
<b>Post-registration</b>	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2014

### 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	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	237	470	2022	The enrolled numbers of learners supplied by the education provider are higher than the approved numbers we have on our records. After the quality activities, the visitors did not have any issues to explore further about the appropriate resources in place.

Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	1%	2019-2020	The data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows the percentage of learners not continuing is less than the benchmark at the education provider which implies learners are satisfied with their studies.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	94%	98%	2019-2020	The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows the percentage in employment or further study is higher than the benchmark at the education provider. This implies learners who successfully complete their learning at this institution make progress after their studies.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Bronze	June 2017	A bronze award indicates “the student experience and outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high-quality features”. Taken from the Office for Students website description of the TEF scores.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	73.3%	67.8%	2022	This NSS summary score indicates the percentage of learners who are satisfied with their learning is lower than the benchmark. After the quality activities, the visitors did not have any issues to explore with the education provider about the wider learning and teaching and support provided to learners about at this education provider. We did identify a risk associated with the paramedic programme and this is outlined in the <a href="#">Data section</a> below.

## 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 [thematic areas reviewed](#) 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 [Summary of findings section](#).

#### Quality theme 1 – development of resources to support learners and deliver effective programmes

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors noted the new Health and Wellbeing building development and considered it to be a positive initiative. They were unclear about the reasoning for this development. They therefore sought further information about whether the introduction of the new facilities was linked to learner concerns about rooming and / or the developments around simulation-based learning. As part of this, they sought clarity about how the new building had been perceived by learners and any internal reflections on its performance.

We also noted the increasing size of cohorts. As such, we sought information about how this had been considered, the subsequent work undertaken to continue to appropriately resource the programmes (i.e. regarding staffing and practice-based learning) and any reflections on these developments.

Following the first quality activity, we continued to have questions about how the education provider had reflected upon resources in relation to increased cohort sizes relating to the staffing required.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore the first quality activity by requesting an email / documentary 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.

We decided to explore the remaining questions as a second quality activity by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most

effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

**Outcomes of exploration:** From the email response, we noted the new facilities were developed so the whole School could be housed in the same building. This enabled growth of the School and the development of simulation based learning. The building only started to be used by learners from the summer / autumn of 2022 so only anecdotal feedback had been received so far. The feedback has been positive, though formal feedback will be sought going forward.

Through the virtual meeting, the visitors clearly understood how the education provider had considered and approached the development of additional resources in line with the increased cohort sizes. For example, the education provider outlined how the recruitment of paramedic lecturers had been difficult. To ensure appropriate current resourcing, the programme team had recruited visiting and associate lecturers. The visitors recognised how this had been identified and was a priority to ensure appropriate staff / learner ratios in the future. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

#### Quality theme 2 – impact of COVID-19 on practice-based learning quality and capacity

**Area for further exploration:** Within the portfolio, the visitors noted the operational mitigations put in place to ensure practice-based learning continued during COVID. They were, however, unable to identify reflections on how these mitigations continued to ensure the quality of practice-based learning during this time. They therefore sought further information about how the education provider reflected upon this, learner perspectives and outcomes from this.

In addition, the visitors noted, the School of Health and Sports Science Placement Capacity Review paper was mentioned. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate this document and were not able to consider the enclosed reflection about practice-based learning capacity during the pandemic. The visitors noted, this document may provide reflection about how COVID had impacted the delivery of practice-based learning, quality, and learner experience. They also considered this document may provide information about changes which may have been made to support learners in practice-based learning. If the Placement Capacity Review paper did not outline the areas above, we sought further information which covered these areas.

Following the first quality activity, we continued to have questions about how the education provider had reflected upon the changes made to practice-based learning in light of COVID and the outcomes of this.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this area by requesting an email / documentary 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.

We decided to explore the remaining questions as a second quality activity by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most



effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

**Outcomes of exploration:** From the email submission, we noted the Placement Capacity Review paper submitted in response to this quality activity. This was produced in summer 2021 and covered programmes approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the HCPC. As well as outlining the issues, this document outlined a range of key priorities and work streams, which will be taken forward with the Academic Lead for Practice Education.

The visitors also noted the example provided from the diagnostic radiography programme relating to academic learning and practice-based delivery. For example, this outlined the virtual nature of academic learning and changes to occupational health requirements for individuals to attend practice-based learning. Overall, this outlined how the programme team continued to support learners throughout the pandemic. This was done via setting initial guidelines and in response to specific queries.

Through the virtual meeting, the visitors discussed the various ways in which learners reactively and proactively feedback on the programme design, changes, and experiences. For example, through the Student Voice Forum which covers academic and clinical settings. This continued throughout the pandemic and the visitors' noted examples of positive and negative learner feedback provided in relation to the COVID changes that were required.

This demonstrated to the visitors how the education provider had reflected upon practice-based learning capacity in light of COVID and put in place appropriate steps. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

### Quality theme 3 – learner feedback on use of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in teaching approaches

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors noted the reflective narrative within the portfolio. In particular, the visitors noted there had been an institutional review of VLE in 2018. The aim of this was to ensure the system was fit for purpose and the continued development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The education provider outlined the process they had undertaken to do this. The visitors considered these to be positive developments. However, they were unsure of any feedback gathered from learners regarding the implementation and use of this approach. We therefore sought information about how the learner experience of how changes to the teaching approaches been reflected upon and any action taken.

Following the first quality activity, we remained unclear about how learners' experiences of the new teaching approaches had been explored and any actions developed out of this.

**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.

We decided to explore the remaining questions as by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

**Outcomes of exploration:** From the email response, we learnt more about the blended approach and how timetabled classes had been online in 2021/22 and had moved back to face to face in 2022/23.

As part of the virtual meeting, we noted that, how the 'Student Voice' had been considered throughout any changes to the programmes. For the VLE, this identified that in the main, learners were happy they could continue with their studies during the pandemic through the use of the VLE. The education provider recognised that some learners found it harder to engage with, and learn through, a purely virtual environment. In these instances, the education provider checked in with these individuals to provide them with additional support. From this, we were satisfied how the education provider had made use of a revised VLE during the pandemic and adapted to individual circumstances when issues arose. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

#### Quality theme 4 – changes to interprofessional education (IPE) approach

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors noted there had been a change at an institutional level regarding the approach to IPE. This resulted in IPE content being embedded into individual programme specific modules rather than across programmes. For example, the visitors noted that Integrated Care had been used as a theme for exploring IPE at a programme level. While the visitors noted this was an appropriate theme to consider, they were unable to identify why the approach to IPE had been determined necessary; how this impacted programmes, so they ensured learners continued to learn from other relevant professions; and how this had been reflected upon following rollout.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We decided to explore this area by requesting an email / documentary 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:** We noted how the IPE content had been mapped across each programme to determine appropriate coverage. For example, the third-year diagnostic radiography learners wrote a reflective piece about working in the interprofessional team and received hospital wide experience by working with other relevant professionals. We also noted how learners continued to meet the aims and learning outcome relating to IPE in the programme which no issues raised.

The education provider outlined how they will be running the first of planned Integrated Care days. These will be run twice a year for all Allied Health Professional and Social Work learners. The first of these ran in November 2022. Due to the timeframes of this performance review, we will consider reflections on the running of

these days through the next performance review exercise. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

#### Quality theme 5 – wider reflections on Equality and Diversity (EDI)

**Area for further exploration:** From the submission, we noted the reflections and analysis of data regarding the ethnic backgrounds of learners on the HCPC approved programmes over the last three years. The education provider acknowledged that applicants from ethnic backgrounds continue to be under-represented though detailed how this figure had increased from 10% in 2018/19 to 16% in 2020/21. However, from this analysis, the visitors could not determine the target set for learners from ethnic backgrounds (or individuals with other protected characteristics) and what strategies had already been undertaken to increase the overall percentage. We therefore sought further clarification.

The visitors also recognised the analysis provided concentrated on admissions. They were unclear whether there was any wider EDI data collected around progression, retention, attrition, awarding or groups, such as gender or disability. If this was available, we sought further information about what reflection / analysis had been undertaken.

**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:** We noted in response, the wider EDI reflections undertaken. For example, regarding attainment rates and the comparison between white and non-white learners achieving a good honours degree. In 2015/16, this difference was 30%, while in 2020/21 this had reduced to 9%. The education provider also outlined a Liberating the Curriculum task and finish group had been established in 2021/22 to ensure barriers to successful access, progression and achievement were removed in relation to all protected characteristics. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

#### Quality theme 6 – projected growth of learner numbers until 2030

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors noted the education provider had set out a projected growth plan until 2030. The visitors considered this could see learner numbers doubling within that time. They did not receive information about how this growth figure had been determined. Therefore, we sought further information about the consideration which had been given to resourcing and infrastructure needs, such as staffing and practice-based learning capacity, to maintain the learner experience over this period.

**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:** In response, we noted how the education provider had devised their projected growth. This included considerations about staff / learner ratios, practice-based learning provision and expansion, and possible degree apprenticeship programme development. It was clear, progress had been made in this area and appropriate thought had been given to ensure the learner experience during this forthcoming period of growth. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

Quality theme 7 – how the education provider utilised reports by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure the quality of practice-based learning

**Area for further exploration:** We noted the process used by the education provider to identify relevant placement providers who had received poor reports from the CQC. The visitors also noted two 'Securing Education Standard reports' included which the education provider completed in response to a CQC report. However, we were unclear of any next steps or interventions undertaken following the production of these reports. As such, we sought more information about how often issues were identified in CQC reports, actions which had come out of the process and any reflection on how the process worked.

Following the first quality activity, the visitors remained unclear about the frequency of issues and any reflections on how this process was working.

**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.

We decided to explore the remaining questions by holding a meeting with the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the remaining themes as we decided it would give the HCPC Panel an opportunity to discuss this with the education provider.

**Outcomes of exploration:** Through the email response, we noted further information about the process of reviewing the CQC reports. This demonstrated a risk-based decision about the issue and appropriate actions outlined in a Securing Educational Standard report for diagnostic radiography. The visitors appreciated the clarity about the process, purpose of the reports and examples of the actions taken forward. However, they remained unclear about how often issues were identified and any reflection on how the process worked.

Through the virtual meeting, the education provider demonstrated examples of how CQC reports relating to practice-based learning capacity were reviewed, how the action plan was developed and communications with learners, including reinforcing the raising concerns process. Through these discussions, the visitors noted the frequency of and timely review of issues and how the education providers process worked to ensure learners were supported and therefore the quality of practice-based learning. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.

## 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 explained the impact of COVID has meant new ways of teaching and learning. Through [quality activities 2](#) and [3](#), we understood how programmes adapted to these and learners embraced the changes necessary to meet the needs of changing expectations.
  - We noted the strong narrative from the education provider about their proactive management of risk, improved and sustainable financial position, and plans for growth until 2030. The latter of these was explored further in [quality activity 6](#).
  - We recognised the investment in resources from the education provider. Through [quality activity 1](#), we explored the recent investment in the new Health and Wellbeing Building Development. Learners and staff have started using this, this academic year. Due to the timing of this, there is limited formal reflection available at the moment. This will be considered further in the next performance review.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Partnerships with other organisations**
  - The education provider outlined how Associate Deans regularly met with senior members of practice placement providers. However, they reflected this did not allow partner organisations to meet simultaneously. As such, the education provider reinstated the Education Practice Forum in November 2021. We recognised the positive engagement and feedback from this group.
  - We noted how the education provider had launched an Integrated Care Academy (ICA) in 2020. This brought together a range of stakeholders in the Suffolk / Northeast Essex region and focussed on promoting integrated and interdisciplinary work. Successes from this group have already impacted programmes by embedding an integrated care core curriculum in all HCPC approved programmes.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Academic and placement quality –**
  - We noted how their quality monitoring processes for practice-based learning involve the review of Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports. Through [quality activity 7](#), we noted the process in place for managing the level of risk based on the CQC reports and the education provider reflections on their experience of this process.

- Due to COVID, the education provider recognised there had been many changes to practice-based learning. Learners were able to feedback on their experiences via a range of channels. For example, programme teams, quality assurance processes, personal academic coaches and teams with the practice setting.
- We also noted the introduction of a Health Placement Expansion Officer to take forward the placement expansion agenda and respond to service challenges.
- As outlined in the section below, the visitors explored the impact of changes to the interprofessional education agenda to the academic quality of the programmes.
- We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
  - We noted there had been changes at an institutional level to how interprofessional education (IPE) was delivered. Through [quality activity 4](#), we noted the rationale for why this change had occurred and the appropriate mitigations put in place for individual programmes.
  - We also noted through this quality activity, the education provider has recently started Integrated Care days for all Allied Health Professional and Social Work learners. The first of these ran in November 2022. Due to the timeframes of this performance review, we will consider reflections on the running of these days through the next performance review exercise. Based on this, the visitors had no further questions for this quality theme.
  - We were therefore satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
  - We noted that, at the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, all service user and carer events were cancelled as these had previously been face to face activities. The education provider reflected upon how it had been challenging to involve service users and carers in prospective learner interviews virtually. As a result, the number of service users and carers involved in the programmes reduced during the pandemic. In order to mitigate this situation, it has planned two recruitment events in April and May 2022.
  - In addition, we noted the development of a Service User, Carer and Citizen Strategy which had been co-produced by service users and carers. This was finalised in November 2021 and has been used by the programmes to enhance the involvement of service users and carers.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Equality and diversity –**
  - From the submission, we noted comprehensive reflections and analysis of applicants from white and non-white backgrounds.
  - Through [quality activity 5](#), we explored how the education provider had reflected upon the wider of protected characteristics across the programme cycle.
  - The education provider outlined how work on all other protected characteristics has been included within the Liberating the Curriculum

task and finish group, which will provide guidance to programme teams on programme design to support all learners. The next steps for this group is to develop an institutional framework that establishes expectations for collaborative and student focused course and assessment design in 2022/23.

- We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**
  - The education provider keeps their portfolio of programmes under continual review, to proactively maintain and increase applications to the programmes approved by HCPC.
  - We noted this ensures new opportunities can be explored and current open programmes remain viable and responsive to current / projected needs as national and local workforce demands change.
  - As an example of mitigations in place, the External Relations Team developed a health-specific marketing strategy to raise the profile of the education provider and programmes across national and international markets.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

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

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** We recognised the investment in resources particularly in the new Health and Wellbeing Building Development. Learners and staff started using this, in the current academic year. Due to the timing of this, there is limited formal reflection available. This will be considered further in the next performance review.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

**Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Impact of COVID-19 –**
  - Across the portfolio, we noted the detailed reflections of the challenges and mitigations put in place about how COVID had impacted the programmes. For example, managing learners' health and wellbeing, and the creation of a dedicated online service called "Coronavirus and your well-being".
  - Through [quality activity 2](#) we explored how the education provider ensured availability and quality of practice-based learning in more detail.
  - The education provider outlined how, through COVID, they had enhanced their simulation abilities. This was due to the significant issues the programme faced due to a lack of availability in practice-based learning. This has continued post COVID as these developments allowed learners to meet the necessary outcomes and were positively evaluated by them.
  - The education provider also recognised the impact on staff, so they were able to get the best out of online delivery. As such, they developed content within Brightspace (an internal education provider

platform). While ensuring staff could deliver content in an effective way, they also provided appropriate support during this time.

- We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
  - Through [quality activity 3](#), we noted how the institutional review of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) had been undertaken and reflected upon by learners.
  - The education provider also outlined how they had rolled out smart audio visual (AV) in 2020/21. This was primarily a result of the pandemic requirements, though this has meant that physical teaching space now have enhanced technology, such as cameras, microphones and speaker systems.
  - We noted the education provider is committed to the continual monitoring of technological requirements.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Apprenticeships –**
  - The education provider outlined they do not currently run any degree apprenticeship programmes within the HCPC regulated professions.
  - We recognised the education provider is continuing to consider the development of health degree apprenticeship programmes.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

**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 –**
  - We noted the education provider had not been subject to any review by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education during the period under review.
  - However, they outlined how they aligned to the Code by putting in place a series of mitigations. For example, any programme under review or in development, must map the learning outcomes to the relevant Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) subject benchmark statements. External Examiners confirm the programmes align with the appropriate standards.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies –**
  - Through [quality activity 7](#), we noted the process used by the education provider to identify poor reports from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) about quality of practice-based learning. We also learnt about the mitigations in place following the receipt of such reports.



- We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes –**
  - Within the portfolio, the education provider demonstrated the use the NSS scores in the development of individual programmes.
  - In particular, the education provider outlined their reflections on the NSS scores for the paramedic programme. Over the last three years, overall student satisfaction has dropped significantly. The education provider recognised this had been contributed to by significant staff absences and the pandemic which had impacted on learning experiences.
  - We noted an action plan had been developed for each area of concern relating to the NSS questions. For example, regarding assessment and feedback, the programme is piloting a video to be shown at the beginning of each module, to explain the assessment and feedback marking criteria.
  - As such, we were satisfied how the education provider considering and analyses NSS data across the programme. Overall, we therefore consider the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Office for Students monitoring –**
  - The education provider reflected upon how, during the pandemic, the Office for Students (OfS) had implemented a number of temporary changes to the regulatory requirements. To address these, the education provider outlined the mitigations they put in place. Analysis of this, identified all reasonable steps had been undertaken to ensure applicants and learners were informed about changes to teaching and assessment delivery.
  - We also noted how the education provider appropriately ensured continued compliance with the OfS ongoing conditions of registration.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
  - We noted the education provider stated how their non-medical prescribing programme was successfully re-approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in December 2020 and General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) in January 2021.
  - We also noted there had been no further accreditations undertaken during the period under review.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

**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 –**

- We noted the education provider updated several programmes during the period to ensure they continue to represent current practice, be fit for purpose and reflect institutional wide changes, such as the change to the delivery of inter-professional learning.
- For example, the operating department practice programme introduced career opportunity workshops. These were facilitated by registered practitioners and allowed learners the opportunity to learn about possible roles and ask questions. In addition, mock interview and application processes were held in conjunction with Trust partners. To date, all learners on this programme have been employed by the Trust they undertook their practice-based learning with.
- We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
  - The education provider outlined that the College of Radiographers had published a research strategy for 2021-2026. This aimed to ensure research skills were positively embedded across undergraduate and post graduate programmes.
  - We noted the mitigations put in place to enhance this area and the analysis undertaken to assess the implementation. We were therefore confident of how the education provider assesses and adapts to changes in professional body guidance.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning –**
  - The education provider reflected on the range of challenges the pandemic created for ensuring appropriate and sufficient practice-based learning. Through [quality activity 2](#), we explored how the education provider had reflected upon learner feedback about this.
  - The visitors also identified ways in which individual programmes have been able to expand their placement capacity. For example, for the diagnostic radiography programme, a local Trust contacted the programme to outline they were expanding their available practice sites from nine to eleven across the East of England. This meant the education provider was able to gradually increase the capacity for this programme.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

**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 –**
  - We recognised the detailed reflections supplied about learner feedback. This feedback came from a range of organisations and internal feedback. For example, Health Education England (HEE), East

of England Ambulance Service Trust, National Education and Training Survey (NETs) and Student Experience Ambassadors. This demonstrated to the visitors, how the education provider had been responsive the Student Voice.

- For example, we noted the feedback from a Health Education England (HEE) engagement meeting with year 2 and 3 paramedic programmes. We also received clarity about the specific actions being taken forward relating to the paramedic programme in relation to the lower-than-expected National Student Survey (NSS) scores.
- We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Practice placement educators –**
  - We noted how the education provider reflected upon feedback from practice placement educators at a programme level.
  - For example, for the diagnostic radiography programme, the education provider outlined how practice educators had fed back, how during the pandemic, they struggled to provide the necessary supervision / mentoring required. Online training was developed and rolled out to practice educators. This has been tested by stakeholders with positive feedback.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is responsive to practice education feedback and therefore how they are performing in this area.
- **External examiners –**
  - We received a full range of external examiner reports from the programmes. From these we noted how the education provider reflected upon these reports for each programme. This demonstrated how the education provider had been responsive to external examiner feedback.
  - For example, in 2018/19 the non-medical prescribing external examiner recommended the assessment strategy be reviewed to consider reducing the load on learners and enhancing critical analysis. Appropriate changes were made in response to these recommendations, including the creation of a Practice Moderation Panel to ensure quality, consistency and sharing of best practice.
  - We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

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

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None.

#### Data and reflections

**Findings of the assessment panel:** The education provider reflected upon the National Student Survey (NSS) scores within their submission. This was particularly noted around the paramedic programme which scored significantly lower than the benchmark around specific questions, including the overall student satisfactory score. The education provider stated it recognised the NSS scores were based on a number of factors, including difficulties recruiting appropriately qualified and experienced paramedic staff and COVID. The education provider outlined how they

had monthly discussions at the School Executive level about recruitment and utilised occasional staff from the local Trust to support provision when needed.

The education provider also explained in their NSS action plan, the approach they are taking to increase the paramedic scores, such as in organisation and management. We recognised the disappointment expressed by the education provider regarding these scores. We considered the risk associated with the NSS scores relating to the paramedic programme and how these improve. Overall, we were satisfied with how the education provider monitors data and implements appropriate action plans.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** For the paramedic programme, we recognised the education provider disappointment with the NSS scores. We also noted the action plan and timeframes put in place to address these. Due to the timescales on these, it has not yet been possible to determine any improvement or learning from the actions. Therefore, we will revisit the data around NSS scores in general, though particular for the paramedic programme, in the next performance review.

**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**

**Summary of issue:** The education provider outlined how they ran the first planned Integrated Care days in November 2022 to build upon their existing Inter-professional Education (IPE). These will be run twice a year for all Allied Health Professional and Social Work learners. Due to the timeframes of this performance review, we will consider reflections on the performance and running of these days through the next performance review exercise.

**Summary of issue:** For the paramedic programme, we noted the action plan and timeframes put in place to address these the lower-than-expected National Student Survey (NSS) scores. Due to the timescales relating to the receipt of these scores, it has not yet been possible to determine any improvement or learning from the actions. Therefore, we will revisit the data around NSS scores in general, though in particular for the paramedic programme, in the next performance review.

**Summary of issue:** We recognised the investment in resources from the education provider, particularly the recent investment in the new Health and Wellbeing Building Development. Learners and staff started using this, in the current academic year. Due to the timing of this, there is limited formal reflection available at the moment. Therefore, we will revisit learner feedback about these new resources in the 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 2025-26 academic year.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report.

**Reason for next engagement recommendation:** We have come to this conclusion because we consider:

- the education provider is clearly committed to quality assurance.
- the education provider responded positively to the challenges of COVID-19.
- the education provider demonstrates responsiveness to recommendations for external regulators and professional bodies.
- the education provider's self-reflection identifies areas which needed attention and they reflected upon their plans that had been put in place to address them.
- programmes have implemented strategies to facilitate and respond to feedback from different stakeholders.
- there is risk associated with the paramedic programme regarding the NSS scores. These were received within the last academic year and the education provider requires time to embed and revise their actions. As part of this, they require appropriate time in which to undertake their analysis and learn from their actions.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer		Diagnostic radiographer	01/09/2006
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practise	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/04/2015
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			19/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology	FT (Full time)	Radiographer		Therapeutic radiographer	01/09/2011
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer		Therapeutic radiographer	01/09/2020
Non-Medical Independent and/or Supplementary Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014
Non-Medical Supplementary Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/01/2014