Approval process report

Keele University, Paramedic 2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve paramedic programmes at Keele University. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

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

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval process was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • whether the programme(s) is approved
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review will be in the 2028-29 academic year.

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:
- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are approved on an open-ended basis, subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

The approval process

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

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

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

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

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view on our website.

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Vince Clarke	Lead visitor, Paramedic
Paul Bates	Lead visitor, Paramedic
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers eleven HCPC-approved programmes across six professions and one independent and supplementary prescribing programme. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1996.

The proposed programme sits within the School of Medicine, which is part of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

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

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2009
	Occupational therapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2024
	Paramedic	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2021
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2018
	Prosthetist / Orthotist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2022
	Radiographer	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2017
Post-registration	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.

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

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	450	480	2022	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources

				available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision. We assessed whether the education provider has the resources in place for the proposed programmes and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2020-21	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 1%. We reviewed the learner experience at the education provider and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	92%	2020-21	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.

				The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 5%. We reviewed learner's experience on programmes and potential for progression and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
Learner positivity score	76.3%	80.0%	2023	This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 5.5%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the education provider is performing above sector norms.
HCPC performance review cycle length	n/a	2028/29	2023/24	The education provider's next performance review is in five years' time. This decision was made in 2023/24.

The route through stage 1

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

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

<u>Admissions</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Information for applicants** –
  - Information is provided on the education provider's website. This contains a breakdown of the entry requirements for all programmes including details of the academic grade requirements, criminal records declaration, health check requirements, and the requirement to attend an interview.
  - The marketing team and programme team review the contents of programme information pages on the education provider's website.
  - Applicants are provided with admissions information during open day talks. Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant school should they need further information about the programme.
  - Programme Specifications are available for all programmes. These provide full information about programmes for a specific year of entry and include information such as fees and additional costs.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - The English language entry requirements are detailed in programme specifications and on programme webpages. Applicants whose first language is not English, must have the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) of 7.0 with no element below 6.5.
  - Applicants must have studied within the last five years. They must also have grade 4/ C in GCSE Maths or Level 2 Functional Skills Maths, and grade 4 / C in GCSE English Language.
  - Applicants' English language skills will be assessed as part of the interview process.
  - All applicants are required to declare any criminal convictions. Applicants need to provide an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. For professional programmes a Health and

Conduct Applicant panel is convened to consider convictions. The panel will include practice-based learning provider representation.
- o Information about the requirement for occupational health clearance is contained on the webpages and the programme specification.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - o Many programmes do not allow APEL. Where APEL is allowed, applications are considered on a case-by-case basis by the relevant programme director to assess the suitability of the prior learning. It will not be permitted on the proposed programme.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** –
  - o The education provider is committed to ensuring equality of treatment of staff, learners, and applicants.
  - o Staff involved in interviewing are required to do EDI training. Interviewers are responsible for ensuring equal opportunities are maintained. This includes seeking further support from Student Support if required and making reasonable adjustments where necessary.
  - o Interviews are undertaken by a minimum of two people. This minimises the potential for bias from one individual.
  - o The education provider is a member of the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and a Disability Confident Employer. They are committed to equality across staff and learner bodies.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]** –
  - o Academic standards conform to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) levels and

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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

subject benchmark statements where applicable. Programmes are validated through Standing Validation Panels (SVPs). These confirm modules and programme are at the correct level to achieve the award.

- o All HCPC-regulated programmes are approved by SVPs at or above the expected threshold level of entry to the Register. Annual programme reviews take place, and external examiners comment on benchmark statements where applicable.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Sustainability of provision** –
  - o Each school holds a budget which is reviewed regularly along with cashflow by the Faculty Management Accountant.
  - o Modules and programmes are reviewed regularly using quality assurance processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
  - o Agreements exist with practice-based learning providers showing joint commitment to the training of learners.
  - o Stakeholders are consulted during revalidation processes to ensure programmes meet the needs of the future workforce for the profession.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o Programme level meetings report into the School Education Committee. This reports to the Faculty Education Committee and then the University Education Committee.
  - o The School Education Committee receives reports from programme boards, undertakes scrutiny of programmes and modules, and approves responses to external examiner reports. It is chaired by the Director of Education.
  - o The Faculty Education Committee has faculty level oversight of and scrutinises new programme development, programme modifications, and learner experience. It is chaired by the Dean of Education.
  - o The University Education Committee is responsible for strategic and policy-related matters about the development and delivery of programmes. It is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education).
  - o All the education provider's regulations provide the framework for programme management. For example, regulation C7 applies to all postgraduate taught programmes. This gives the framework to manage the programme in areas such as admissions, maximum period of registration, learner engagement with studies and assessments, determination of results, and action to be taken in the event of failure.

- o Programme teams are led by a registrant of the relevant profession. Other staff are also registered. For example, the Director of Education is a Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registrant.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o The education provider has a probation procedure for all staff, with points for review. The procedure provides a set time when new staff have more intensive guidance, encouragement and appropriate early training.
  - o Staff Performance Review and Enhancement (SPRE) is mandatory for all staff. The SPRE provides a framework for managers and their staff to work together. This framework clarifies expectations and ensures they are realistic and relevant to the direction of the education provider and to the career planning of the individual staff.
  - o Academic staff can request study leave to support their development. They are also encouraged and supported to become members of the Higher Education Agency (HEA). The Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE) supports staff development by offering expertise in academic development, technology, and employability. Organisational Development offers training and support to all staff.
  - o Lecturers are supported by their Programme Director and the governance structures, Directors of Education, Deans of Education and Heads of School.
  - o Practice Educators are supported by the education provider and are offered training and updates as required.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The education provider has partnerships with NHS providers to support practice-based learning for the programmes.
  - o Agreements are in place with practice-based learning providers to support learning and the provision of the future workforce for these professions.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

<u>Quality, monitoring, and evaluation</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality** –
  - Academic quality is maintained through a cycle of monitoring, review, and evaluation. This includes module evaluation by learners, review of performance on modules, annual programme reviews, and revalidation.
  - External examiners are appointed for all programmes. They are invited to provide feedback. Programme teams meet to discuss external examiner feedback and how to respond. The education provider responds to this feedback following examination boards. They also meet to discuss any proposed changes to modules based on all feedback.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
  - The faculty has a newly constituted Placements and Quality Management Committee with representation from all schools in the faculty, the Placements team, and the Quality team. We will need to consider the Committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
  - The school has a practice-based learning team who carry out quality assurance checks on all practice education providers. They provide training for new practice educators and refresher training for longstanding educators. A staff member meets with learners and their clinical educator for each practice-based learning. During link tutor visits and practice-based learning debriefs, learners are asked about any safeguarding issues, serious incidents, discrimination, and whistleblowing situations. These are documented in the link tutor visit form and practice-based learning debrief form.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement** –
  - Learner representatives are chosen by the cohort. These attend Student Staff Voice Committee (SSVC) meetings to give the views of their cohort. SSVC feedback comes to programme meetings and on to School Education Committee and SSVC as appropriate.
  - Learner feedback is used to inform any changes to modules and programmes. Learner feedback is requested when programmes are going through revalidation or new programmes are being developed.

- o The Students' Union and Keele Postgraduate Association are learner body organisations. They have representation on University Committees.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policy regarding service user and carer involvement. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at service user and carer involvement at programme level.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The faculty has a newly constituted Placements and Quality Management Committee with representation from all schools in the faculty, the Placements team, and the Quality team. As this is new, we will need to consider the committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policies regarding service user and carer involvement. As it is not set at the institution level, we will review service user and carer involvement at the programme level through Stage 2.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
  - o University Regulation B covers all learners' rights and responsibilities. It states learners can access support when they have an issue which is affecting their ability to submit work.
  - o The Support to Study Policy applies where learners need additional support to continue their studies. The first stage involves a meeting with the Student Experience and Support Officer, the learner, and a member of academic staff. A plan is put into place to help the learner move forward with their studies.
  - o There is an Academic Mentoring code of practice. Learners are allocated an academic mentor who signpost support services. If a learner requires reasonable adjustments, they can contact Student Services.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
  - o Learners complete a declaration annually relating to their health and suitability for the programme.
  - o If there is a concern around a learner's health and / or conduct, they will be referred to the school's Health and Conduct Committee.
  - o Learners are required to inform the education provider if there are any changes to their DBS clearance.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
  - o The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences has an interprofessional education sub-committee. They meet regularly and report to the Faculty Education Committee annually.
  - o The Keele University Interprofessional Education programme is designed to enable interprofessional learning throughout the curriculum. This programme includes a range of learners from professions such as biomedical science, child nursing, mental health nursing, medicine, physiotherapy, and diagnostic radiography.
  - o From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policies regarding interprofessional education. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at interprofessional education at programme level.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider is committed to ensuring equality of treatment of staff, learners, and applicants. They are a member of the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan, Stonewall Diversity Champion and is a Disability Confident Employer.
  - o The School of Medicine was awarded an Athena Swan departmental silver award in July 2023 in recognition of its work in gender equality. The school is a member of the Midlands Racial Equality in Medicine network. They are a signatory to the British Medical Association (BMA) charter against racial harassment, BMA pledge to end sexual harassment, and the UK Medical School's Charter on So-Called LGBTQ+ Conversion Therapy. The school has introduced bullying and harassment reporting for staff and learners and is rolling out microaggression training for all staff.

- o Learners are sent a 'Say my name' form to highlight their pronouns, and name pronunciation. Assessment dates are reviewed annually to consider the impact of dates upon religious holidays.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider has informed us of the interprofessional education sub-committee in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Also, the Interprofessional Education programme is designed to enable interprofessional learning throughout the curriculum. From the information the education provider provided, they also run profession specific policies regarding interprofessional education. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at interprofessional education at programme level through Stage 2.

<u>Assessment</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** –
  - o Assessments are designed to ensure they test learning outcomes. They are reviewed as part of module approval and revisions.
  - o There are exemptions from anonymous marking where it is not possible, for example for presentations. Where this is the case, the exemption is written into the module specification.
  - o External Examiner reports are received after each board. Responses are drafted and approved at School Education Committee. These include how programme teams plan to respond to any recommendations made by External Examiners.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - o The explanation of protected titles and exit awards for learners who do not achieve the requirements for that award are stated in the programme specifications.
  - o Professional programmes attendance requirements are more stringent than for non-regulated programmes. These requirements are stated in programme handbooks and are communicated to learners.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Appeals** –
  - o All learners have the same right to appeal. They may only appeal based on exceptional circumstances not known at the time or procedural irregularity.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

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

There are three areas we will need to review through stage 2 of the process:
- The faculty has a newly constituted Placements and Quality Management Committee with representation from all schools in the faculty, the Placements team, and the Quality team. As this is new, we will need to consider the committee and practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments, as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- From the information the education provider provided, they run profession specific policies regarding service user and carer involvement. As it is not set at the institution level, we will need to look at service user and carer involvement at programme level.
- The education provider has informed us of the interprofessional education sub-committee in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Also, the Interprofessional Education programme is designed to enable interprofessional learning throughout the curriculum. From the information the education provider provided, they also run profession specific policies regarding interprofessional education. We will need to be assured how the programme prepares learners to work with other professionals and across professions for the benefit of service users and carers.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:
- The School of Medicine is a multiprofessional school. A Programme Award Lead will be appointed in readiness for the start of the programme. The paramedic science programme team includes:
  - o registered paramedics;
  - o non-paramedic academic staff;
  - o programme administrators;
  - o Placements and PSRB and Quality Assurance Team.

The programme is also supported by Clinical Skills and Simulation Teaching Fellows from the central faculty team to support the delivery of clinical skills and simulation activities.

- Most of the programme is delivered in the School of Medicine in teaching rooms equipped with computers, internet access and projection equipment. Rooms can be used for larger groups and more informally for small groups working together.
- The learning resources available to learners include materials relevant to undergraduate and postgraduate study. These are held in both the main library on Keele campus, and in the Health Library on the campus of the University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust. The Keele Virtual Learning Environment (KLE) provides access to a wide range of learning resources including lecture notes, presentations and discussion boards enabling learners to discuss topics with peers and tutors.
- The KLE and Microsoft Teams are used to facilitate a blended learning approach to modules as appropriate. The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and School of Medicine has specialist resources to support the delivery of the programme. This includes a Secondary Care Simulation Centre. This is based at the Clinical Education Centre. It has integrated clinical skills rooms and simulation facilities. IT suites and computers are situated in the Main Library and in the Health Library.
- All resources are in place to deliver the programme.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: 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 Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic	30 learners, one cohort per year	22/09/2025

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

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

Data / intelligence considered

We also considered intelligence from others (eg prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- NHS England (Midlands) – we received information considering current pressures regarding practice-based learning for physiotherapy in the Midlands. The information was reviewed but we considered it would not impact on this assessment.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the Findings section.

Section 4: Findings

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

Conditions

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

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

Overall findings on how standards are met

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

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - Entry to the programme will be a minimum 2.2 Honours degree as well as a minimum of two years relevant experience, and evidence of continued professional development (CPD). The education provider accepts an honours degree in a biomedical science or health-related subject (e.g. biochemistry, physiology, healthcare science, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery and physiotherapy). Applicants must have studied in the last five years and need grade 4 / C or higher in GCSE English Language and Maths, or Level 2 Functional Skills Maths.
  - An NMC or HCPC registered healthcare professional with conditions of practice will not be eligible to apply for the programme.
  - Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a recognised qualification in English language. The minimum score for entry to the programme is Academic IELTS 7.0, to include a minimum of 6.5 in each subtest, or equivalent.
  - Conditions of entry include satisfactory occupational health clearance and Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance.
  - The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - Practice-based learning provider meetings take place regularly at both operational and strategic levels. The Placements Management and Quality (PMQ) sub-committee is responsible for managing and enhancing practice-based learning opportunities and for quality assurance.
  - The Paramedic Science programme board meets a minimum of four times a year. They:
    - review the learning and teaching within the Paramedic Sciences programme against the strategic plans of the School, Faculty and education provider;
    - monitor and enact activities for effective working within the programme and the dissemination of best practice;
    - provide a learner-centred approach that integrates academic and personal support throughout a learner's studies; and
    - ensure compliance with the quality and standards of the Health and Care Professions Council and other external partners.
  - The education provider has quarterly contract review meetings with West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). The education provider also liaises with staff at the Ambulance Service, such as Operation Managers and Mentors, including visiting practice-based learning settings and undertaking online meetings. The education provider also

liaises through meeting with University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust.

- o The education provider has received letters of support from organisations who are willing to support practice education. For example, WMAS.
- o Service users and carers involvement at the programme level can be seen through their involvement in the design of the programme. They will also be involved in different areas of delivery of the programme. For instance, a service user will be part of the interview panel involved in recruiting to the programme.
- o The education provider has appointed a full complement of staff with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to teach. The business case for the proposed programme includes an additional Grade 8 Lecturer post for 2025, and one Grade 8 and one Grade 7a lecturer in subsequent years of delivery.
- o There are an appropriate range of roles involved with the delivery of the programme. Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences lecturers in clinical skills and simulation support the delivery of the programme. Subject specific experts support the delivery of specialist subjects. These include General Practitioners, Speciality Doctors, Nurses and Midwifes, Social Workers and Counsellors and a Psychotherapist.
- o The education provider has a range of support services for learners. For example, disability and dyslexia support, and academic coaching. The Darwin Simulation Centre is situated on the main campus. It has been refurbished and offers facilities such as a fully furbished ward and a dedicated virtual reality space. The education provider has two health houses, which are fully furnished houses for simulation scenarios.
- o The education provider has paramedic education specific facilities including two training ambulances. The Clinical Education Centre has skills labs for skills sessions, with a variety of room capacities and procedural equipment. Learners will also access to support mechanisms in the practice-based learning settings they are working in.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o The programme ensures all graduates can meet the Standards of proficiency (SOPs). All modules and learning outcomes are mapped to the SOPs.
  - o The programme has been designed to meet all the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics. A range of modules teach learners about professional and regulatory standards including the Standard of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. For example, module Behavioural Health for Paramedics.
  - o The programme has also been designed to meet the College of Paramedics paramedic curriculum of 2024 and had been endorsed by the professional body.

- o The programme has been developed in response to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023) and follows its recommendations for programme design and structure. The education provider stated the programme is in line with current key drivers such as an increasing demand on services. The education provider will review the programme regularly through its quality assurance processes such as annual programme review to ensure the curriculum remains relevant to current practice.
  - o The programme has employed a spiral curriculum whereby areas such as theory, skills, simulation and practice-based learning are taught and revisited in greater depth throughout the programme.
  - o Practice-based learning takes place throughout each academic year of the programme as part of the practice-based learning modules. The education provider stated theory and practice are integrated to allow learners to put skills and theory into practice to reinforce learning.
  - o There are a variety of learning and teaching methods. For example, lectures, small group workshops, and independent study.
  - o Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) documents demonstrate the development and evidence of capability in practice and the development of autonomous and reflective thinking.
  - o Evidence-based practice is taught throughout the programme. For example, the module Research and Evidence Informed Practice introduces the topic. The module Advancing Practice Project builds on learner's previous studies looking at research and evidence-based practice.
  - o Interprofessional education (IPE) takes place throughout the programme. Learners undertake practice-based learning in a variety of settings with learners and professionals from other healthcare professions. The education provider will also run joint IPE simulation activities such as team activities with other first year learners from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Learners will need to complete a portfolio-based reflection document where they will evaluate and reflect on interactions with other healthcare professionals in clinical practice. Learners also undertake simulation exercises with midwifery, social work learners and child protection police officers.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o Practice-based learning is integrated to allow learners to put skills and theory into practice to reinforce learning. The programme aims to reflect the role of the paramedic in delivering care in a range of healthcare organisations and environments. It builds on learners' previous experience and prepares them to work in diverse areas of clinical practice.
  - o Practice-based learning forms approximately half of the programme. Learners undertake a maximum of 1350 hours of practice-based learning. Learners undertake 14 weeks in practice-based learning in

the first year of the programme, and 16 weeks in the second year. Practice-based learning settings include emergency, urgent and primary care settings. The education provider works with practice-based learning providers to offer practice opportunities across a range of settings. For example, the ambulance service and general practice.

- o The Placements Management and Quality (PMQ) sub-committee is responsible for effective quality assurance of practice-based learning. The education provider visits practice-based learning providers a minimum of once every two years. PMQ develops, implements and monitors placement guidelines, protocols and policy which include health and safety and risk assessment and management. Annual reports are produced by the practice-based learning providers. The PMQ is a space to highlight the diversity of quality processes and to encourage collaborative working practices, to standardise where possible.
- o The education provider will join the PARE educational audit group in the West Midlands to align their practice-based learning audit process by using a standardised audit. This is based on the NHS England quality framework.
- o The education provider provided details of the number of practice educators available at each practice setting. Paramedics involved in supervision will be registered with the HCPC. Non-paramedic supervisors will be on the relevant professional register (e.g. GMC / NMC). The education provider provides practice educators with access to online resources to support learners and develop their knowledge.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o There are a variety of assessments used throughout the programme. For example, poster presentation and reflective analysis. Module Pathophysiology & Pharmacological for Paramedics has two assessments, a presentation of 25 minutes and a mixed examination of two hours. Module descriptors include information about the assessments used in each module. The SOPs mapping document details how learning outcomes is assessed to ensure each SOPs is met.
  - o The programme has been designed to meet all the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Throughout the programme, learners are assessed on their professional skills and behaviours, such as professional attitude, and evaluate their own practice. For example, learning outcome three – "Critically discuss frameworks for professional practice on ethical, legal, regulatory, and professional issues that inform and shape paramedic practice" - of the module Principles of Paramedic Practice.
  - o Learning outcomes are assessed using a range of assessments, for example written work and assignments. This is to ensure inclusivity for learners. The variety of assessment methods reflects the knowledge

and skills which are developed as learner's progress through the programme.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area 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 that standard being met in the future. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

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

Education and Training Committee decision

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

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:
- The programmes are approved

Reason for this decision: The panel accepted the visitors' recommendation that the programme should receive approval.

Appendix 1 – summary report

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

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
Keele University	CAS-01516-S7Z0G5	Vince Clarke Paul Bates	Through this assessment, we have noted: The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.	Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities: The School of Medicine is a multiprofessional school. A Programme Award Lead will be appointed in readiness for the start of the programme. The paramedic science programme team includes: - registered paramedics; - non-paramedic academic staff; - programme administrators; - Placements and PSRB and Quality Assurance Team. The programme is also supported by Clinical Skills and Simulation Teaching Fellows from the central faculty team to support the delivery of clinical skills and simulation activities.

				Most of the programme is delivered in the School of Medicine in teaching rooms equipped with computers, internet access and projection equipment. Rooms can be used for larger groups and more informally for small groups working together. The learning resources available to learners include materials relevant to undergraduate and postgraduate study. These are held in both the main library on Keele campus, and in the Health Library on the campus of the University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust. The Keele Virtual Learning Environment (KLE) provides access to a wide range of learning resources including lecture notes, presentations and discussion boards enabling learners to discuss topics with peers and tutors. The KLE and Microsoft Teams are used to facilitate a blended learning approach to modules as appropriate.

				The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and School of Medicine has specialist resources to support the delivery of the programme. This includes a Secondary Care Simulation Centre. This is based at the Clinical Education Centre. It has integrated clinical skills rooms and simulation facilities. IT suites and computers are situated in the Main Library and in the Health Library. All resources are in place to deliver the programme.

Programmes		
Programme name	**Mode of study**	**Nature of provision**
MSc Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2009
MSc Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			20/01/2024
MSci Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2021
MSc Physiotherapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2020
MSci Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2019
MSci Physiotherapy (with International year)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2019
MSc Prosthetics and Orthotics	FT (Full time)	Prosthetist / orthotist			01/01/2022
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)	FLX (Flexible)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		26/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Radiography (Diagnostic Imaging)	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2017
MSci Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapy			23/09/2024
Independent and Supplementary Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014