HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Wolverhampton
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, Full time BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship, Full time
Approval visit date	28 July 2020
Case reference	CAS-15969-W4Z2S0

Contents

Executive Summary

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.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards
We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards 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.

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

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 undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make 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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Jennifer Caldwell	Occupational therapist
Joanna Goodwin	Occupational therapist
Rabie Sultan	HCPC executive
Tracey Samuel-Smith	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the virtual approval visit
There were other groups involved with the approval process as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Ruth Shiner	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Wolverhampton
Julie Haydon	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Wolverhampton
Clair Parkin	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Theresa Baxter	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Alison Hampson	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Anna Pratt	Professional body representative	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 September 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02240

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 April 2021
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02241

We undertook this assessment of new programmes proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involved consideration of documentary evidence and a virtual approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we ask for certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provider decided to move this event to a virtual (or remote) approval visit. In the table below, we have noted the meeting held, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Not Required	As this was a virtual visit and, because the visitors did not have areas to address with this group, we decided that it was unnecessary to meet with them
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Not Required	As this was a virtual visit and, given the current situation around the Covid-19 pandemic, we decided that it was unnecessary to meet with this group
Facilities and resources	Not Required	As the visit was virtual and the visitors were able to determine through the programme documentation, that many of the standards had been met, they decided it was unnecessary to have a virtual tour of the facilities and resources
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice educators	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the virtual approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The

visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 06 October 2020.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners on the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship programme.

Reason: From their review of the evidence provided for this standard for the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy programme, the visitors noted the responsibility of the Practice Placement Manager for increasing placement capacity and the quarterly meetings between the education provider and practice education providers to discuss practice-based placements capacity. From reviewing the minutes and relevant notes of the meetings, the visitors were satisfied there is a process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for learners on this programme.

From reviewing the evidence for the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship programme, the visitors noted 'Document F Apprenticeship Information'. Within this, the visitors noted that practice education providers will identify placement opportunities for their employees on the apprenticeship programme, in conjunction with the education provider. Additionally, the education provider also evidenced their successful Strategic Support Fund application submitted to Higher Education England (HEE), which will provide funding for two 'Placement Expansion Lead (Allied Health)' positions which will be from two of their partner practice education providers. One will be from the Midlands Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust, whilst the other one will be from Black Country Allied Health Professions Council. These two positions will be in post by September 2020 and will be responsible for monitoring placement capacity and identifying further placement opportunities for all learners once the programme commences. No further information was provided at the time about the role within the process of the Placement Expansion Leads, nor how they collaborate with the placement education providers and the education provider. The visitors also reviewed the May 2020 BSc (Hons) OT Development Employer Forum meeting notes between the education provider and practice education providers, regarding the arrangement of apprentice placements. The notes stated that "…representatives from larger organisations were happy to arrange the apprentice placements", however there were discussions that apprentice learners "…will have more knowledge and skills if they went to another organisation for at least one of their placements". It was stated "This meant that small organisations would not be able to offer learners the range of experiences necessary for the programme". The notes also suggested that reciprocal arrangements between organisations can be arranged to enable the range of placement experiences necessary for all learners on the apprenticeship route, which will be discussed further and agreed closer to the start of the programme. At the visit, the programme team and practice educators confirmed that there will be variety of

placements including role emerging placements and there are considerations for having long arm supervision placements as well.

Based on their review of the documents and discussions held at the visit, the visitors could not determine the process the placement education providers will use to identify and allocate the appropriate range of placements on the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship programme. Without any further information provided, it was also not clear what role the two Placement Expansion Lead (Allied Health) positions will have in determining capacity and availability of placements for apprentice learners nor, how they will work will practice educators and the education provider. The education provider has overall responsibility for the programme including ensuring that there are appropriate processes in place to make sure all apprentices on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs. The visitors understand that for this programme, practice education providers play a key role in ensuring this, however, they are unclear of this process and how the education provider will be involved. The visitors therefore require the education provider to demonstrate the effective process they have in place with the practice education providers, and their role in this process, to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners on the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship programme.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how learners will be able to learn with, and from, learners in other relevant professions for both the programmes.

Reason: In their review of the documentation, the visitors noted the education provider plans for inter-professional (IPL) opportunities on both of the proposed programmes. This will be achieved via shared modules, specialist lectures and simulation activities with learners from the physiotherapy, paramedic and nursing programmes. Additionally, there was also mention of further IPL opportunities by involving learners with a wider range of professionals during practice-based learning. The education provider also evidenced proposed timetables for both programmes showing the relevant modules, which will be delivered as joint sessions along with the learners from other professions. The visitors considered the proposals for both the programmes, but could not see any information regarding what IPL teaching will take place during the timetabled sessions or at practice-based learning.

At the visit, the programme team stated that both programmes will start off with one shared IPL module per year that will involve case studies. Additionally, the programme team stated there are future plans to further develop IPL by involving learners from the podiatry and paramedic professions. The programme team also conveyed that once both the proposed programmes commenced, further IPL teaching developments will be made which will include learners from social work and nursing programmes. Without any further information provided regarding the future IPL teaching strategy to be developed, including the type of activities learners would be involved in, the visitors could not determine how learning are prepared to work with other professionals and across professions for the benefit of service users and carers.

In particular for the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship programme, the visitors were unclear how the proposed start date of

April 2021, allowed learners to undertake IPL alongside learners on the proposed podiatry programme which is due to start in September 2021. Based on this, the visitors were not clear how it will be possible to timetable and conduct IPL sessions for the first cohort of learners on BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship programme with learners from other relevant professions.

The visitors understood the education provider's intentions of developing further opportunities for IPL on both the programmes, once they commence. However, from the information provided and discussions held at the visit, the visitors were not able to determine what the proposed teaching strategy will consist of and how it would be embedded through both of the proposed programmes. Based on this, the visitors were not clear whether learners are able to learn with, and from, learners in other relevant professions. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate and articulate what IPL there will be on both the programmes, and how they will ensure that learners on these programmes will learn with, and from, learners in other relevant professions.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 12 November 2020 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.

Section 6: Future considerations for the programme(s)

We include this section to note areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes. Education providers do not need to respond to this section at this time, but should consider whether to engage with the HCPC around these areas in the future.

The visitors considered that the conditions were now met at a threshold level. The visitors noted that the education provider has provided assurance they have overall responsibility of securing placements on the degree apprenticeship programme. However, it was noted that the employing practice education provider will identify the required four placement experiences in collaboration with the education provider's Occupational Therapy Placement Lead. Additionally, the two Placement Expansion Lead (Allied Health) positions responsible for determining capacity and availability of placements for apprentice learners will be secondment posts contracted for 6 months, with a possible start date from December 2020.

The education provider should consider closely monitoring how the collaboration continues regarding the availability and capacity of practice-based learning, once the two secondment posts' contract end. This is to ensure all learners on the degree apprenticeship programme have access to the necessary placements, so this will not impact on the way the programme continues to meet the SETs. The visitors wished to highlight these areas for those visitors looking at future assessments.