

HCPC annual monitoring process report

Education provider	Anglia Ruskin University
Name of programme(s)	FDS in Hearing Aid Audiology, DL (Distance learning)
Date submission received	06 February 2020
Case reference	CAS-15502-Q3M2V7

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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 annual monitoring 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).

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports. 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:

Elizabeth Ross	Hearing aid dispenser
Carly Elliott	Radiographer - Therapeutic radiographer
Rabie Sultan	HCPC executive

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	FDS in Hearing Aid Audiology
Mode of study	DL (Distance learning)
Profession	Hearing aid dispenser
First intake	01 July 2008
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 92
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	AM09061

We undertook this assessment to consider whether the programme continued to meet our standards over the last two academic years. This assessment formed part of our regular monitoring required of programmes on a cyclical basis.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require 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.

Required documentation	Submitted
HCPC annual monitoring audit form, including completed standards mapping	Yes
Internal quality reports from the last two years	Yes
External examiner reports from the last two years	Yes
Responses to external examiner reports from the last two years	Yes
Practice based learning monitoring from the last two years	Yes
Service user and carer involvement from the last two years	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission, the visitors are not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that our standards continued to be met at this time, and therefore require further evidence as noted below.

Further evidence required

In order to determine whether the standards continue to be met, the visitors require further evidence for the following standards for the reasons noted below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programme(s), and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the standards.

3.8 Learners must be involved in the programme.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider evidenced the structure of student staff liaison committee (SSLC) and minutes related to this meeting. The evidence

explained that this committee consisted of the course leader, learners and lecturers. In this meeting, issues regarding the programme were discussed. From reviewing the minutes of the SSLC in 2018 and 2019, the visitors noted there were no learners present in either of the meetings.

From reviewing this evidence, the visitors noted that the way the education provider intended to involve learners in the programme, was not being fulfilled and as such, their contribution to the programme was unclear. Due to this, the visitors could not determine how this standard has been met, as it was not clear how learners' feedback is taken into account to add to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme.

Suggested evidence: The education provider must demonstrate how learner input and feedback is taken into account to add to the quality and effectiveness of the programme.

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider evidenced the curriculum vitae of one member of staff. However, from reviewing the 'Doc M COURSE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT ACTION PLAN) 2018-19' document, the visitors noted the comments under section 7, regarding the low National Student Survey (NSS) score for organisation and management of the programme. This was particularly around not having sufficient support when the former programme leader departed. The visitors noted that the previous programme leader had departed '...part-way through the year...', and there was a shortage of staff across the programme. Though the programme team has now recruited a new programme leader, issues remained around inconsistent teaching materials and lack of support to learners. The visitors noted that the education provider identifies this as an area which '...requires further attention...' and is likely to continue into the current year due a '...period of significant flux...'

From reviewing the submission, the visitors could not find information regarding the plans in place to ensure there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in the teaching for this programme. Due to this, the visitors could not determine if there will be enough support for learners on this programme and whether the education provider has any contingency plans to resolve this. Therefore, the visitors could not determine if this standard continues to be met

Suggested evidence: The education provider must demonstrate the plans in place to ensure there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to support learners on this programme.

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

Reason: For this standard, the education provider evidenced relevant pages of the 'MOD002455 Understanding the Work Sector' module. From their review, the visitors noted the evidence outlined aspects of the programme such as length and structure of the programme and structure, but they could not see any information regarding inter-professional learning (IPL), for example, which professions will be involved for IPL on this programme. Based on this, the visitors could not determine how learners will be

able to learn with, and from other learners and professionals on this programme. Due to this, the visitors could not determine if the standard has been met.

Suggested evidence: The education provider must demonstrate what IPL will take place on this programme. The evidence must also demonstrate what professions will be involved.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: From reviewing the mapping document, the education provider stated for SET 5.3 that they had made a decision in 2017 not to carry out audits of practice-based learning (PBL), but will instead rely on the learners' survey to take note of any issues or concerns they raise. The visitors noted the feedback form that learners are asked to complete. On this form, it stated that their information will not be shared with anyone. The visitors could not find any information regarding what the follow on steps were once this feedback was received from learners and they were therefore unclear about how this information would be utilised. Additionally, the visitors were unclear about how relying on learners' feedback alone would ensure PBL was effectively quality assured or monitored on a regular basis. The visitors were therefore unclear about the thorough and effective system in place for approving and monitoring the quality of practice-based learning.

The evidence provided for SET 5.3 referred the visitors to the supervisor agreements, which mentioned the form to be completed to ensure learners have a practice educator before they join their practice-based learning site. As the education provider stated for SET 5.3, they do not carry out audits or visit practice-based learning sites, the visitors could not determine how they ensured there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators for this programme.

Additionally, the visitors noted the training for practice educators is now online and undertaken in the form of webinars which include online reading materials and recorded lectures. From reviewing the web link the visitors could not see the content of the training. Additionally, as the education provider does not carry out audits or visits to practice-based learning it how the education provider ensured that practice educators undertake regular training to ensure they were adequately prepared to support learning and assess learners effectively.

Due to the observations above, the visitors could not determine how these standards continue to be met.

Suggested evidence: The education provider must demonstrate:

- How they uses learner feedback from PBL to act on issues raised and how this ensures a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring practice-based learning;

- How they ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators in place:
- How they ensure practice educators undertake regular training to ensure they were adequately prepared to support learning and assess learners effectively.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider mentioned that they have made changes to ‘Module MOD002477 Auditory assessment 2’, by changing the practical assessment in speech audiometry to a theoretical examination. The visitors reviewed the module descriptor provided as evidence, but could not determine how removing an important component of practical examination in speech audiometry will ensure that learners who complete the programme will ensure all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) continue to be met. In particular this related to SOP ‘14.2 to be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy, or other actions safely and effectively.’ Without further information regarding how the theoretical assessment will ensure this SOP is met, the visitors could not determine how this change sits within the overall assessment strategy for this programme. Due to this, the visitors could not judge how this standard continues to be met.

Suggested evidence: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy will ensure learners on this programme continue to be able to meet SOP 14.2.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

The education provider responded to the request for further evidence set out in section 4. Following their consideration of this response, the visitors were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that the following standards continue to be met, for the reason(s) detailed below.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Reason: As part of the initial submission the education provider stated that in 2017, they had made a decision to change how they ensured the quality of practice-based learning and therefore, rely on the learner survey to identify any issues or concerns. The visitors were unable to determine how this feedback was taken forward or how it demonstrated a thorough and effective process for ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

In response to the additional documentation request, the education provider submitted a covering letter addressing how they approve supervisors. In addition, they referred the visitors to a range of documentation such as the Supervisor’s handbook, Supervisor Declaration Form and the Process for assessing supervisors. Within the covering letter, the education provider clarified that ‘The programme has historically always run in the manner presented, and has never audited practices – supervisors are nominated and supervisor declaration forms completed before places on the course are offered...’. From their review of the Supervisor Declaration Form, the visitors noted that as part of the ‘Supervisory Obligations’, supervisors confirm ‘I will ensure that the practice facilities

and equipment are to the standard required for providing a full hearing aid dispensing service.’ The visitors recognise this is a distance learning programme and that this means there may be different approaches to how practice-based learning is approved and monitored. However, the visitors were unable to determine from the documentation submitted the standards, the education provider expected, of facilities within practice-based learning to ensure they were suitable and supported safe and effective learning. In addition, the visitors were unclear about how the education provider ensured these standards were met by each practice education provider during initial approval and through regular monitoring. The visitors therefore recommend that a visit is undertaken to demonstrate how this standard continues to be met.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners’ needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: As part of the initial submission the education provider stated that they had moved practice educator training online, including reading materials and recorded lectures.

In response to the additional documentation request, the education provider submitted a covering letter addressing how they train supervisors. In addition, they referred the visitors to a range of documentation, such as the Supervisor’s handbook and a PDF of the supervisor training page. From the covering letter, the visitors noted that during 2017-18 and 2018-19 ‘All supervisors were asked to attend, or watch, an online webinar...’. The covering letter goes on to say that attendance was low – approximately 20 per cent. As a result, changes were made to the training and attendance has risen to approximately 70 per cent in the current academic year. The education provider also confirmed that a new policy was to be introduced so that supervisors would have to complete the webinar by week 4 of the course start date and this will be ‘...strictly enforced.’ The visitors recognise the increase in attendance at the training sessions, however, they remain unclear about how the policy will be implemented so that practice educators are aware of the obligation to attend regular training. In addition, the visitors were unclear how the education provider ensures that practice educators participate in the training necessary for the programme. This is to ensure they are appropriately prepared to support the learning and assessment of learners effectively. The visitors therefore recommend that a visit is undertaken to demonstrate how this standard is met.

Section 6: Visitors’ recommendation

Considering the education provider’s response to the request for further evidence set out in section 4, the visitors are not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the standards continue to be met for the reason(s) noted in section 5, and recommend that an approval visit is undertaken to consider the approval of the programme(s).

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 21 May 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](#).