

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Liverpool John Moores University
Programme name	Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	23 – 24 August 2016

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'paramedic' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 24 November 2016. At the Committee meeting on 24 November 2016, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HCPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider also validated the programme. The education provider and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Susan Boardman (Paramedic) Vincent Clarke (Paramedic) Kathleen Taylor (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Rebecca Stent
Proposed student numbers	Year 1 direct entry 50 students per cohort, 1 cohort per year Year 2 24 students per cohort, 1 cohort per year Total 74 students in year 2
First approved intake	September 2009
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2016
Chair	Tony Hall (Liverpool John Moores University)
Secretary	Lucy McKenzie (Liverpool John Moores University)
Members of the joint panel	Sarah Edge (Student representative) Pauline Brookes (Internal panel member)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CertHE Urgent and Emergency Care Information Pack	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service users and carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval the visitors must be satisfied that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for the relevant part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 46 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 12 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors did not make any recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must update their programme documentation to accurately reflect the mode(s) of study for the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted that there is a part time route listed for the programme on page 2 of the programme specification. However, at the visit, the programme team clarified that this was an error and there is only a full time route. Therefore, the education provider must update their programme documentation to accurately reflect the mode(s) of study for the programme, so that applicants have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a programme.

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the admissions procedures ensure that all successful applicants have a good command of reading, writing and spoken English, including those who do not have English as their first language.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the education provider currently accepts Emergency Medical Technicians level 2 (EMTs level 2) directly onto year two of the programme via their accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) process. From September 2016, the education provider plans to admit Emergency Medical Technicians level 1 (EMTs level 1) onto year two of the programme via the AP(E)L process. However, the visitors did not see evidence of the English requirements for EMTs level 1 or EMTs level 2 who can access year two of the programme. At the visit, the programme team also stated that there is an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score which students have to demonstrate in order to be accepted onto the programme where English is not their first language. However, the visitors did not see evidence of the required IELTS score for applicants for whom English is not their first language. Therefore, the visitors require additional evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures all applicants meet the English requirements, including those who do not have English as their first language, and how this is communicated to applicants.

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the admissions procedures apply appropriate academic and professional entry standards for entry to year two of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the education provider currently accepts Emergency Medical Technicians level 2 (EMTs level 2) directly onto year two of the programme if they hold an Ambulance Technician 2 Institute of Health Care Development (IHCD) award. From September 2016, the education provider plans to admit Emergency Medical Technicians level 1 (EMTs level

1) onto year two of the programme if they have at least two years' experience as an EMT level 1 and hold a CertHE Urgent and Emergency Care award from Liverpool John Moores University. In addition, the education provider clarified that only applicants employed by North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) would be accepted onto year two of the programme. However, this professional entry standard was not clearly communicated in the programme documentation. Furthermore, it was not clear at the visit whether CertHE awards from other universities will be accepted, or how the admissions procedures ensure that EMTs level 1 and EMTs level 2 will have appropriate literacy and numeracy standards for entry to year two of the programme. As such, the visitors were unable to determine whether EMTs who can access the programme at year two will have the appropriate academic and professional standards to enter this programme. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate how the admissions procedures ensure that successful applicants are to an appropriate academic and professional standard to study the programme, and how these requirements are communicated to applicants.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning procedure for this programme is appropriate to exempt students from elements of learning and / or assessment.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted that applicants who have completed the CertHE Urgent and Emergency Care programme at Liverpool John Moores University and have at least two years' experience as an Emergency Medical Technician level 1 (EMT level 1) can apply for year two of the programme. In addition, the education provider clarified that only applicants employed by North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) would be accepted onto year two of the programme. However, it was not clear at the visit whether CertHE awards from other universities will be accepted and, if they are, how the education provider makes a judgement about whether to accept these awards. The education provider stated that all EMT applicants would be subject to the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning process before they would be accepted onto year two of the programme, regardless of which CertHE award they had completed. However, the visitors did not see evidence of how the AP(E)L process would be used to appropriately exempt students from elements of learning delivered and assessments. Therefore, the education provider must provide further information about the admissions procedure for EMTs level 1, who will be exempt from year one of the programme, to demonstrate how their AP(E)L process is effectively exempting students from elements of the teaching and assessment.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: In the programme documentation, the visitors noted references to an HCPC requirement of 1500 practice hours. However, the HCPC does not stipulate the number of practice hours that students must complete. The visitors also noted references in the programme documentation that students will be "prepared for registration with the

HCPC". However, students who successfully complete the programme are only eligible to apply to register with the HCPC – registration is not guaranteed on completion of the programme. Therefore, the visitors require evidence that the programme documentation has been updated to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of mechanisms in place for monitoring attendance, as well as how they clearly communicate attendance requirements, including any consequences of missed teaching, to students.

Reason: From a review of the documentation prior to the visit, the visitors were unclear about how attendance is monitored for taught sessions, and how attendance requirements are clearly communicated to applicants. Therefore, the visitors decided to question this area at the visit – even though this is an approved programme – to ensure that this standard continues to be met. In meetings at the visit, the programme team stated that they expect 100 per cent attendance on the programme and that they monitor attendance closely as a team so that they are able to identify where students have missed a session. However, the visitors could not identify a formal mechanism for monitoring attendance and were unable to find evidence of attendance requirements in the documentation for students. Therefore, the education provider must provide evidence of formal mechanisms in place for monitoring attendance and how they clearly communicate attendance requirements and any consequences of missing teaching to students.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that students who enter the programme via the AP(E)L route are able to meet the SOPs for paramedics on completion of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and at the visit, the visitors were uncertain about the admissions requirements and the AP(E)L policy for EMTs level 1 who are able to enter year two of the programme, as detailed under the condition for SET 2.6. As such, the visitors could not determine that students who enter year two of the programme will achieve all of the learning outcomes and successfully meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics at the end of the programme. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate how the admissions requirements and AP(E)L policy ensure that students will achieve the learning outcomes for the exempted modules so that EMTs level 1 will be able to meet the SOPs for paramedics.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how practice placement educators at practice placements have undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: At the visit, the visitors noted that senior paramedics at placement are the practice placement educators who sign off students' placement experience. However, the visitors also noted that it is 'mentors' – registered paramedics within the placement team – who directly work with the students on placement. The visitors heard that mentors are expected to undertake training in their own time and that senior paramedics advise the mentors about skills that need development. However, the visitors could not identify a required training programme for mentors or senior paramedics and how the education provider ensures that this training takes place. As such, they were unable to determine whether all practice placement educators will have undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training. Even though this is an approved programme, the visitors must see evidence that all practice placement educators have undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training in order to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;
- expectations of professional conduct;
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how students are fully prepared for placement, including information about the the roles and responsibilities of practice placement educators.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted multiple references to a variety of practice placement educator titles, specifically 'mentor' and 'named mentor'. At the visit it was confirmed that there was a variety of practice placement educators with a range of titles and subsequent responsibilities. However, from the documentation the visitors were unable to determine the distinction of the different titles. In particular they could not determine whether a 'named mentor' and 'mentor' had the same role at placement or, if they are different, how the roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined to students. As such the visitors note that there was a potential risk that students would not be made fully aware of the roles and lines of responsibility of the practice placement educators. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of practice placement educators and how this information is provided clearly and consistently to students.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that the assessment of learning outcomes ensures that Emergency Medical Technicians level 1 (EMTs level 1) who enter year two of the programme are able to meet the SOPs for paramedics.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and at the visit, the visitors were uncertain about the admissions requirements and the AP(E)L policy for EMTs level 1 who are able to enter year two of the programme, as detailed under SET 2.6. As such, the visitors could not determine how assessment of students will ensure that students who enter year two of the programme have met the SOPs for paramedics at the end of the programme. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate how the admissions requirements and AP(E)L policy ensure that students will achieve the learning outcomes for the exempted modules so that EMTs level 1 will be able to meet the SOPs for paramedics.

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Condition: The education provider must update the programme documentation so that the assessment of the objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), including the challenge test, is consistent and ensures fitness to practice in relevant areas.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted inconsistencies in the documentation about whether the OSCEs, including the challenge test, were assessed as pass / fail or whether they had a minimum pass mark of 40 per cent. At the visit, the programme team confirmed that the OSCEs and challenge test were assessed as pass or fail. The visitors were satisfied that this was appropriate, but require the programme documentation to reflect this, in order to determine that the measurement of student performance is consistent and ensures fitness to practice for all students.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that the assessment regulations clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors did not see evidence in the assessment regulations which specifies requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register. In the undergraduate assessment regulations, the visitors noted that “where there is insufficient evidence to determine the recommendation of an award but the Board of Examiners is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award had it not been for illness or other valid cause, an aegrotat award may be recommended.” At the visit, the programme team stated that they do not provide aegrotat awards. However, the visitors did not see information available to students and staff that an aegrotat award would not be awarded for this programme or, if an aegrotat award is awarded, that this would not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. Therefore, the visitors require evidence which clarifies whether aegrotat awards are given for this programme and, where they are given, that it is clearly communicated to students and staff that students who are awarded an aegrotat award are not eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC.

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