

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Stirling
Name of programme(s)	BSc Paramedic Science, Full time
Approval visit date	17-18 March 2020
Case reference	CAS-14942-X4P6S5

### Contents

Section 1: Our regulatory approach .....	2
Section 2: Programme details.....	3
Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment.....	3
Section 4: Outcome from first review.....	4
Section 5: Visitors' recommendation.....	7

### 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:

Gemma Howlett	Paramedic
Gordon Pollard	Paramedic
Deirdre Keane	Lay
John Archibald	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Leigh Sparks	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Stirling
Alexander Griffiths	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Stirling

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 60
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02145

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite 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	Comments
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	
Internal quality monitoring documentation	Not Required	The programme has never run.

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	The programme has never run so we met with learners from BSc (Hons) and BSc Nursing (Mental Health), BSc (Hons) and BSc Nursing (Adult) programmes.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	
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 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 29 April 2020.

**4.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.**

**6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) are consistently taught and assessed throughout the entire programme and the learning outcomes.

**Reason:** To meet these SETs, the visitors were informed one of the programme's learning outcomes is to practice within the legal and ethical boundaries demonstrating integrity, sensitivity and respect. The visitors noted examples of where module learning outcomes ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the SCPEs. The visitors were able to see explicit reference to the SCPEs being taught and assessed in the learning outcomes for

modules 'Paramedic Practice 1' in year one and 'Paramedic Practice 4' in year two of the programme. The visitors considered the responsibility to teach and assess the SCPEs lay with the practice educators, who were undertaking this in the context of the Practice Assessment Document. The visitors considered therefore that the teaching and assessment of the SCPEs could be subjective and different for each learner.

During the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed in year three the SCPEs were embedded in paramedic modules. However, the visitors were not able to see clear references to the SCPEs in the learning outcomes, nor in details of the assessments on the programme in year three, and considered the SCPEs were not fully and clearly embedded throughout the programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence which shows the learning outcomes being explicitly linked to the SCPEs across modules on the programme and how assessment of the expectations of professional behaviour, including the SCPEs, are carried out within the curriculum and modules within the university assessments throughout the programme as well as in practice-based learning.

#### **4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate they have a process in place for obtaining explicit and appropriate consent from service users where appropriate.

**Reason:** From the documents provided prior to the visit, the visitors were informed learners have to give consent in situations where they take part as service users in practical and clinical teaching and that there is a student consent form which needs to be completed by learners. The visitors were made aware the Practice Assessment Document (PAD) stated that learners need to always seek consent from service users at all times and must respect the rights of a service user to decline their participation in care, or to decline care. In the meeting with service users and carers, the visitors were informed service users would give verbal consent when interacting with learners in practical sessions and teaching. However, the visitors did not see a way of formally documenting consent from service users and so were therefore unsure whether there was a formal process for obtaining appropriate and explicit consent from service users when interacting with learners in practical sessions and teaching. The visitors therefore require the education provider to demonstrate they have an effective and up-to-date process in place for obtaining formal consent from service users on the programme where appropriate.

#### **5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure learners have the appropriate time in practice-based learning to support the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme, and the SOPs.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were informed about the periods of practice-based learning learners have to undertake. The visitors were informed from the Practice Assessment Document (PAD) that learners will complete 20 weeks of practice-based learning in year three of the programme. The visitors could also see from further information provided by the education provider that

learners would be required to complete 832 hours of practice-based learning in year three. They also noted that 20 weeks of practice-based learning at 35 hours per week would give less than the required amount, unless learners were required to undertake overtime. The visitors considered learners would not be able to complete the required practice-based learning in the timeframe given to do so and were unclear how practice-based learning would allow learners to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and the SOPs. The visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure learners have the appropriate time to make it feasible to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and the SOPs by either reducing the total number of hours so it equals 20 weeks, or increase the number of weeks so learners can meet the required number of hours and ensuring the references to the duration of practice-based learning in the documentation are correct.

### **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. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

#### **3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Recommendation:** The education provide should consider whether the information they give learners and educators contains correct references to the programme.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided prior to the visit and following discussions at the visit, the visitors considered the programme resources to be readily available to learners and educators and are used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. However, the visitors noted that there were documents which referred to nursing, for example 'UoS Example of Shortlisting Grid'. The visitors considered these references could be misleading to those involved with a paramedic programme. As such, the visitors recommend that the education provider reviews the programme documentation to ensure it contains appropriate information in regards to the programme.

#### **3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing the documentation to ensure it is clear that the programme leads to eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC.

**Reason:** The visitors were made aware from the programme handbook that learners have to successfully complete all modules on the BSc Paramedic programme, which would result in them accruing 360 credits in order to be eligible for the award of BSc Paramedic Science from the University of Stirling. The visitors were also informed any shortfall in credits will mean learners cannot be awarded with a degree or other award with the title paramedic in it. The visitors considered it was clear about which programme leads to eligibility to apply for registration. However, the visitors were made aware of a reference to the programme in the programme specification and module

descriptors document which said the programme 'ensure[s] you are *eligible for registration* [emphasis added] with the Health & Care Professions Council as a paramedic'. As such, the visitors recommend the education provider reviews references to the programme giving learners the eligibility for registration.

## 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 02 July 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](#).