

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Liverpool
Name of programme(s)	MSc Diagnostic Radiography (pre-registration), Full time accelerated
Approval visit date	07 July 2021
Case reference	CAS-16899-K2D5Q6

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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 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
Mark Widdowfield	Radiographer - Diagnostic radiographer
Temilolu Odunaike	HCPC executive

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.

Louise Almond	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Liverpool
Rebecca Rylance	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Liverpool
Allan Saunders	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Liverpool

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Diagnostic Radiography (pre-registration)
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Radiographer
Modality	Diagnostic radiographer
Proposed First intake	01 January 2022
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 40
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02326

We undertook this assessment of a new programme 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
Internal quality monitoring documentation	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, because the visitors did not have areas to address with this group, we decided that it was unnecessary to meet with them.
Facilities and resources	Yes	Facilities and resources were covered in a presentation by the programme team.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice educators	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

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 26 August 2021.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme, meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for radiographers.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the SOPs mapping as evidence for this standard. They also reviewed the module descriptors where the education provider indicated how the learning outcomes will deliver the SOPs. The visitors noted that many of the learning outcomes were generic and it was not made explicitly clear within the module contents, how specific aspects of the SOPs would be delivered. For example, SOP 7: Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

- 7.1 be aware of the limits of the concept of confidentiality
- 7.2 understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health and social care information
- 7.3 be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users or the wider public

The visitors noted that the education provider indicated the following learning outcomes from the DRAD403 module – Clinical and Professional Practice and mapped them to the above mentioned SOPs:

- Critically evaluate and appraise experiences of clinical practice, including, communication and patient-centred care via reflective practice.
- Perform safely, accurately and efficiently a range of radiographic techniques, adaptive radiographic techniques and reflect on effective communication, team working, and effective administrative and organisational skills in professional practice.
- Competently perform and reflect critically on clinical practice in a manner that demonstrates professionalism, safe handling and working procedures and medico-legal awareness in accordance with HCPC guidance.

The visitors considered that whilst these learning outcomes could possibly fall under the general banner of professionalism, the knowledge that underpins safeguarding and confidentiality (for example General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the processes of safeguarding), are not included explicitly within the module content. Without having these made explicit in the documentation, the visitors could not be certain that learners would cover these specific aspects of professionalism in this module or in the course of their study.

The visitors brought this to the attention of the programme team at the visit and made it clear that there needs to be more evidence of where the learning outcomes are met so the visitors can be satisfied that all aspects of the SOPs are covered. The visitors considered that, for example, the education provider could have the learning outcomes listed above, but the indicative content for the module would still need to cover areas such as confidentiality, consent and GDPR. Therefore, the education provider must review the module contents to ensure all the components of the SOPs for radiographers are covered in the modules.

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

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning and that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning for the number of learners on the programme.

Reason: The visitors reviewed documentation submitted prior to the visit, including the University - Provider Placement Agreement, The College of Radiographers' Placement Pro Forma, clinical educators' curricula vitae, the practice placement profile and completed placement audit documents. From their review and through discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that there is currently practice - based learning capacity and staffing available for up to 20 learners. However, the visitors were unable to establish how the education provider would ensure capacity for 40 learners (effectively 80 learners in the second year of the programme). Similarly, the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider will ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

In discussions with the practice educators, the visitors heard that staffing within placements is currently at full capacity and that there is need for more radiographers in order to be able to cope with the additional number of learners, alongside the number of learners on the existing BSc (Hons) provision. The practice educators also stated that the education provider organises teaching sessions to help staff cope in practice - based learning and to ensure staff feel valuable and supported in their role. However, they confirmed that they had in the past, struggled to cope with the limited time available and would appreciate if they had more hours to support learners in practice - based learning. The practice educators could also not assure the visitors that there is a process in place that would ensure practice - based learning capacity for the intended 40 learners on the programme.

The programme team, in their meeting, mentioned that they intend to start the programme with up to 20 learners and confirmed they have placement as well as staffing capacity in practice - based learning for up to 25 learners and will be looking to take more staff if needed. However, they were unable to demonstrate how they will ensure sufficient placement capacity and adequate number of staff in practice-based learning when the programme grows to up to 40 learners.

The visitors were therefore unsure that the education provider has a process in place that would ensure all learners on the programme have access to practice – based learning and that there is adequate number of practice educators for up to 40 learners, the programme is seeking approval for. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how placement availability and capacity will be maintained and that there is sufficient and suitable staff for all learners to take part in safe and effective practice - based learning.

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 28 September 2021 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).