
Performance review process report

University Centre South Devon, Review Period 2021-23

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of University Centre South Devon. This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future, and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have

- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against quality themes and found that we needed to undertake further exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission to consider which themes needed to be explored through quality activities
- Undertaken quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed
- Decided when the institution should next be reviewed

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - How the education provider closed the loops on interaction with regulatory bodies to improve the quality of practice-based learning. We understood an Education Audit was conducted to ensure a quality learning experience using the reports from findings to assess suitability. The visitors were satisfied that the quality activity addressed their concerns.
 - How the education provider addressed high learner non-continuation rate. We understood there has been improvement in non-continuation rate and proactive support for learners' wellbeing, disability, and academic skills will continue to improve learner outcomes. The visitors were satisfied that the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.
 - The following are areas of best practice:
 - The visitors noted the education provider achieved Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold, with the top-level judgements for Student Experience and Student Outcomes both being Gold. The education provider is one of only three large Further education Colleges (FECs) in the country to achieve a gold rating for all three aspects of the rating, and one of only 26 higher education (HE) providers nationally, including all types of HE providers. The TEF review team found the education provider to have
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seven outstanding quality features and five very high-quality features. The visitors commended this and considered it good practice.

- The visitors considered it sector best practice to have a practice liaison committee that meets at least twice a year. This effectiveness was also evidenced in the education provider's NSS scores.
- The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
 - The education provider is introducing a new approach to how they deliver interprofessional education. They noted that for the 2024/25 timetables, interprofessional collaborative practice will be included, with master class activities supporting this collaboration. As this is a new development the visitors have referred this area to the next performance review to understand how it has progressed.
 - The visitors noted that service user and carer involvement has been identified as a challenge and there are plans in place to move responsibilities to alternative line management. To ensure this has been embedded and is effective the visitors have referred this area to be reviewed at the education provider's next review.
- The provider should next engage with monitoring in two years, the 2025-26 academic year, because:
 - The visitors considered that the education provider has performed well overall, and there are no significant risks identified.
 - We also identified areas where the education provider demonstrated good practice.
 - However, due to the lack of comparable data in all three areas where it is required, we are only able recommend a maximum review period of two years. We would expect that the education provider will engage with our proposed arrangement to establish data points when this becomes available before their next performance review.

Previous consideration Not applicable. The performance review process was not referred from another process.

Decision The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide:

- when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be
- whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how

Next steps

- Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2025-26 academic year
- Subject to the Panel's decision, we will [undertake further investigations as per section 5

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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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.

This is a report on the performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which 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.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:

- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

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 design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the 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 takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support a review of this education provider:

Robert MacKinnon	Lead visitor, Clinical Scientist (Audiology), Hearing Aid Dispenser
Joanna Finney	Lead visitor, Operating Department Practitioner
Mohammed Jeewa	Service User Expert Advisor
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer
Hugh Crawford	Advisory visitor, Hearing Aid Dispenser

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers four HCPC-approved programmes across one profession. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2020.

The education provider engaged with the performance review process for the first time in 2021. There were no referrals made from the review. There was a lack of comparable data points to inform us of progress, therefore our recommendation for the performance review period was two years.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Hearing Aid Dispenser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2020

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes¹.

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Numbers of learners	136	62	2023-24	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted

¹ An explanation of the data we use, and how we use this data, is available [here](#)

				<p>through these processes. The value figure was presented by the education provider through this submission.</p> <p>The education provider is recruiting learners below the benchmark</p> <p>We explored this through the assessment. We understood the education provider is managing their numbers and this does not impact their sustainability.</p>
Learner non continuation	3%	N/A	2020/21	<p>There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data reporting for this, and other data points, through this performance review assessment.</p>
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	93%	96%	2020-21	<p>This HESA data was sourced from a summary data. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has been improved by 1%.</p> <p>We explored this through the assessment. The education provider's reflection in this area showed that given the nature of the provision, most if not all learners go on to continue in their current employment or seek higher level employment</p>

				opportunities within the sector.
Learner satisfaction	75.1%	74.8%	2022	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) learner satisfaction data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects</p> <p>The data point is broadly equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 25%.</p> <p>We explored this through the assessment. We noted the education provider had a score of 100% the previous year which was responsible for the huge difference. However, we noted other positive scores around learner satisfaction and the mechanisms that the education provider puts in place to support them in responding to learners have been effective.</p>

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the [thematic areas reviewed](#) section of this report.

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider was performing well against our standards.

Quality theme 1 – how the education provider closed the loops on interaction with other regulatory bodies to improve the quality of practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted that the majority of cohorts were already in employment through apprenticeships particularly in hearing aid dispensary. The education provider has employed a Placement and Practice Learning co-ordinator to support in identifying suitable practice-based learning within the audiology team.

In addition, the visitors noted the education provider discussed in detail, partnership working and service user input, however they did not demonstrate reflection processes from professional or regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and how their inspections and findings were reflected within their provision. The visitors were unable to determine if findings from such bodies were considered and acted on to drive improvement. The visitors therefore requested to know how the education provider closed the loops on interaction with other regulatory bodies to improve the quality of practice-based learning.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this through email clarification as we considered this the most appropriate way for the education provider to explain how they have addressed the issue raised by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider noted they collaborated with various health and social care organisations to place learners for exposure to different practice-based learning areas. We noted the Placement and Practice Learning coordinator conducted an Education Audit for each practice provider to ensure a quality learning experience using the CQC reports to assess suitability. Occasionally, learners were placed in organisations needing improvements due to limited practice-based learning options, with mentor support and careful discussions.

The education provider also reflected on their work with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and local education providers to share reportable concerns. They reported having only one instance requiring an alternative practice-based learning. We understood this flagged area was recorded and no longer used for future practice-based learning. The education provider also reflected that concerns and exceptional reports were shared confidentially at the Practice Learning Committee. The visitors were satisfied with this response and determined the quality activity had adequately addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 2 – how the education provider addressed high learner non-continuation rate

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted no programme-level non-continuation data for the FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology available from HESA. They also noted non-continuation data was still reliant on internal data sets from the ILR. Due to the growth in learner numbers and balance of higher apprentices and student finance learners, non-continuation data remained unstable. The visitors considered this a potential area of risk due to the varied high-level outcomes (5.46-14.29%) with limited ability to get more details into the data. The visitors therefore requested further reflection to understand how the education provider was addressing it.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this through email clarification as we considered this the most appropriate way for the education provider to explain how they have addressed the issue raised by the visitors.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider noted that learner numbers have increased significantly, and non-continuation rates have improved compared to 2020/2021. This improvement was seen as a positive sign for the programme's growth and expansion. We understood that in 2020/2021, only four learners did not complete, which disproportionately affected the completion rate. Since then, learner numbers have grown without a corresponding increase in non-completion. The education provider reflected that their proactive support for learners' wellbeing, disability, and academic skills will continue to improve learner outcomes. The visitors were satisfied that the response provided adequately addressed their concerns. Following the quality activity, the visitors had no further concerns.

Section 4: Findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
 - The education provider considered themselves an anchor within the community. They explained this meant they are responsible for delivering high-quality education, skills, and training to help individuals and employers achieve their goals. This they noted has helped to support aims to boost local economic activity and enhance both business and personal prosperity.

- The education provider reviewed their performance against operational plans annually and noted they ended 2022/23 in surplus despite the political and economic climate both domestically and internationally. They noted plans were in place to reduce debt and increase reserve through operational plans. From the income generated yearly, the education provider continued to reinvest back into the college, learning resources and additional staffing to ensure sustainability.
- The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's reflection showed they remain financially stable and continue to resource to their programmes. The visitors therefore determined the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - The education provider noted they have strong partnerships with integrated care board, local NHS Trusts, other HEIs, research networks, and primary care training hub. They noted they held regular meetings with their partners to ensure practice-based learning met requirements.
 - The education provider reflected that in 2022, they re-established a link with a large local provider and engaged with new NHS Trusts to review progression to healthcare science with an audiology specialist pathway. In Autumn 2023, the local provider offered lecturing staff honorary contracts to maintain practice currency and enhance clinical exposure awareness.
 - The education provider also noted they have links to professional, statutory and regulatory bodies; being accepted as associate member of the Council of Deans.
 - We noted their partnership with the University of Plymouth as the level 6 validation partner. We understood their collaboration with other HEIs has helped to support communication on initiatives like funding opportunities and has helped to maintain a system approach to education.
 - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider continues to form useful partnerships which have supported their provision. The visitors therefore determined the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Academic quality –**
 - We noted Teaching and Learning policy was revised and approved in 2020 which was informed by Ofsted, Office for Students (OfS), Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and other bodies. The policy was updated in 2022 to reflect updated Quality and Standards Conditions. External examiners have provided positive feedback and learners reported 86.1% satisfaction with feedback and assessments where national benchmarks were 82%.
 - The education provider has received triple gold in outcomes, experience and overall rating in their teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) rating. We noted recent framework reapproval underpins a robust quality assurance process and approval process with attention paid to OfS B-conditions. We also noted that completion of higher education teaching qualifications helped them to build strength in this area and is in line with the sector.

- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined they have performed well in this area.
- **Placement quality –**
 - The education provider undertakes an educational audit procedure which ensures the quality and suitability of practice-based learning from the start of studies and allows for concerns to be raised during the programme. Concerns were addressed according to this procedure and reviewed by the Practice Learning Committee. This framework maintained high standards and addressed any issues promptly.
 - As outlined in [quality theme 1](#), we understood how the education provider closed the loops on interaction with other regulatory bodies to improve the quality of practice-based learning.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and the additional information received and determined they have performed well in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
 - The education provider noted the curriculum offers multiple optional pathways linked to HCPC registered professional support roles like podiatry, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy. They noted this allows learners to engage with dual professional staff experienced in multidisciplinary clinical teams. The education provider has an annual research showcase event that provides opportunities for learners and staff to share research and innovations, fostering interprofessional discussion and collaboration.
 - The education provider noted that currently they cannot offer interprofessional education as a shared delivery module because they only provide the Hearing Aid Dispenser as a foundation degree with HCPC registration. However, they mentioned the potential to offer more HCPC-related provision and modules in the future, focusing on professional expectations with a multi-professional approach. They noted this would promote broader thinking across professions about their impact on patients and their wider healthcare needs.
 - We sought further clarification around the introduction of joint / cross learning / teaching sessions. The education provider explained that as a small provider, modules from the different programmes do not overlap, but they have a yearly research showcase that encourages cross-collaborative approaches. They noted that for the 2024/25 timetables, interprofessional collaborative practice will be included, with master class activities supporting this collaboration. The education provider elaborated more on how this would work. For example, we understood learners could deliver sessions on ear care to Assistant Practitioner and Nursing Associate learners, while the latter can support the former in patient mobility and mental health awareness.
 - As this is a new development the visitors have referred this area to the next performance review to understand how it has progressed.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - The education provider reflected on the challenges they continue to experience with their Patient, Carer and Service User group (PCSUG).

These relate to consistency of members and social linkups. The education provider noted they are enhancing clinical exposure for learners by increasing their direct interactions with service users during practical sessions. We understood feedback from these interactions will be used to improve future planning and involvement.

- Further clarification was sought around how the education provider ensured PCSUG was suitably resourced and executed or their plans to do this going forward. We noted PCSUG remains a challenge, prompting the education provider to seek a broader resource of individuals. We were informed that the responsibility for enhancing this group has been assigned to the Practice Learning Coach role, which interacts with all health-related learners and supports PCSUG by collating and distributing information.
- They noted the post holder will also collaborate with local community groups to expand the group's membership and service user availability. New PCSUG members will be introduced to the curriculum through programme teams and invited to join the Practice Learning Committee for engagement with employers and practice learning partners. Additionally, they will participate in programme delivery sessions to share patient experiences.
- The visitors noted that service user and carer involvement has been identified as a challenge and there are plans in place to move responsibilities to alternative line management. To ensure this has been embedded and is effective the visitors have referred this area to be reviewed at the education provider's next performance review in 2025-26 academic year.
- **Equality and diversity –**
 - The education provider has an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy in place in conjunction with single equality scheme. They also have an inclusive practice policy and ensure all staff undertake EDI training biannually, and module on unconscious bias is mandatory.
 - There is a reasonable adjustment and disability policy in place, and where there may be objections or complaints in regards to EDI there are numerous mechanisms to engage with the education provider.
 - The education provider has 5-year Access and Participation Plan in line with OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register to identify and support underrepresented groups into higher education.
 - Inclusive practice policy and reasonable adjustments policies as well as the Tri-annual Equality, Diversity, Access and Participation Committee are policies and structures that have been used to successfully monitor EDI.
 - In addition, we noted data reporting has led to identified improvements that are being implemented to enhance access to support and early identification of needs within the education provider.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined that they have performed well in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The education provider reflected that horizon scanning is done on a risk and opportunity approach. They noted they do this to ensure

readiness for growth opportunities and potential sector challenges in both the education sector and related professions.

- The education provider noted they have embedded new resource and auditing software and board assurance framework are in place to enable risk to be measured monthly. We understood this provided assurance of future proofing.
- The education provider plans to develop new provision. They noted that the rise in degree apprenticeships is seeing traditional routes becoming less popular. , However, they have secured OfS funding opportunities through the OfS funding competition to support with the development of this route.
- Similarly to sector wide cases, the education provider noted they are building resilience to artificial intelligence (AI)-based malpractice. In terms of programme enhancement, the education provider reflected that the affordances of AI and technology in simulation would also help to keep their provision current.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and therefore determined they have performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up:

The education provider is introducing a new approach to how they deliver interprofessional education. They noted that for the 2024/25 timetables, interprofessional collaborative practice will be included, with master class activities supporting this collaboration. As this is a new development the visitors have referred this area to the next performance review in the 2025-26 academic year to understand how it has progressed.

The visitors noted that service user and carer involvement has been identified as a challenge and there are plans in place to move responsibilities to alternative line management. To ensure this has been embedded and is effective the visitors have referred this area to be reviewed at the education provider's next review in the 2025-26 academic year.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
 - The education provider described how they made changes to embed the revised SOPs. They noted it was initially challenging but has led to changes to the learning outcomes. They noted they have remapped the curriculum and transitioned their provision to blended learning with face to face and online sessions. They added that they consulted with external partners to ensure their programmes continue to be fit for purpose.
 - The education provider has built on existing resources to make delivery more robust as promoting public health and preventing ill health was

already part of programme delivery. For example, we noted learners were asked to consider different audiology related activities and use various models to encapsulate their learning.

- In relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) the education provider has incorporated lived experience into the programme to demonstrate some of the nuances around EDI – particularly in accessibility. Reflective sessions allowed learners to consider all elements of EDI in practice and how this in turn influences their practice and ways of thinking. We also noted their collaboration with Disability Support, Education Support and Wellbeing Support Teams has helped to keep EDI provision current and comprehensive.
 - To further centralise the service user, the education provider undertook a comprehensive review of the curriculum and introduced more patient centred focused methodologies. They also partnered with charities and clinics to expand exposure and practice-based learning to allow greater understanding of role. They noted the expanded practice-based learning opportunities have allowed learners to gain exposure to a wide range of patient populations and clinical scenarios. As a result, learners have demonstrated increased clinical competence during Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) and proficiency in providing personalised hearing healthcare services.
 - Registrants' mental health - this was an area that the education provider reflected they had not really considered, which again led to positive change. We understood joint sessions from the wellbeing and teaching teams have allowed for greater exploration of what this means to the professional practice. Sessions have been embedded into the core curriculum to explore registrant mental health and techniques to keep themselves well.
 - The education provider is aware that digital technology is expanding rapidly – particularly with regards to hearing aids and audiology. They are working with industry partners to deliver joint teaching to allow learners' access to new state of the art treatments and equipment. The education provider is considering providing examinations through a virtual learning environment. They have also invested in digital literacy review and data analysis and made learners aware of the support available in these areas.
 - The education provider has put in a series of mitigations in order to meet the SOP on leadership. These include a new community of practice, seminars and peer to peer feedback sessions where best practice, constructive criticism, support and discussion of leadership in healthcare can be discussed and explored. The education provider noted that senior leaders who are graduates reflected that the collaborative learning allowed them to become effective leaders in practice.
 - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider has embedded the revised SOPs. Therefore, they have determined that the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**

- The education provider noted that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) has become an area of concern, particularly around assessment. Modifications to Turnitin- their online submission system - have had to be made to accommodate AI technology, and in house training has been provided to staff. They advocated the use of long-standing pure tone audiometry (PTA) simulation tools, in the form of both AudSim and the Manchester University Audiometry Simulator Tool, allowing learners to practice in a risk-free environment.
- The education provider intends to continuously monitor the use of the application and their long term goal is to improve simulation based and digital provision. We noted lectures are now both live and recorded – based on feedback from learners.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider’s reflection and have determined they have performed well in this area.
- **Apprenticeships in England –**
 - We noted an increase in apprenticeship provision across the education provider from 50 to 80+ programmes, although non-HCPC programmes. The education provider is registered on Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). This register was developed in 2023 and merged the Register of Approved Training Providers and the Register of Approved End-Point Assessment Organisations.
 - Apprenticeship programmes were developed in collaboration with employers as key stakeholders in this area. The education provider noted they have continued to horizon scan utilising a team of experts within their Business Solutions Hub who work with employers to explore skills-based curriculum to meet their need. When there is a potential opportunity, this is then supported by the curriculum team as sector experts to ensure the need of the sector is being met.
 - The education provider reflected on a detailed review their Hearing Aid Dispenser programmes had in March 2023. They noted the review included discussions with learners and employers as well as observation of teaching and learning and evaluating impact linked to outcomes. The education provider reflected that this deep dive methodology has provided a deeper and more detailed insight of a specific standard and resulted in a detailed action plan being developed aligning to what could be done better.
 - The visitors considered that the education provider’s reflection has reassured them that they continue to perform well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
 - The education provider noted this was reviewed through their South Devon College (SDC’s) committee structure three times a year, leading

to the Higher Education (HE) Academic Board and subsequently the SDC governance structures.

- As well as internal structures, the education provider has reviewed processes and partnership working with other HEIs. They noted their programme approval process is robust enough to align to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) statements and benchmarks. Apprenticeship standards and professional standards and were overseen by external examiners and employers.
- The visitors were satisfied that the education provider has continued to perform well in this area.
- **Office for Students (OfS) –**
 - The education provider noted they have not been subject to a quality assessment or undergone enhanced scrutiny or monitoring and have had no reportable events. We noted they undertook the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) exercise and were awarded triple gold in 2022/23.
 - The education provider undertook a full review of the changes and during 2022/23 implemented a number of changes to respond. This included ensuring that key programme documentation such as Programme Quality Handbooks, website information, admissions communications, and policies were modified to reflect the new conditions. It also helped to ensure the terminology used was aligned to that of the OfS.
 - The visitors considered the achievement of Gold for all three aspects good practice. They were satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - The education provider reflected on their active ongoing involvement with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the General Dental Council (GDC) and discussed the multidisciplinary team (MDT) who deliver the education. We also noted they are in the early stages of working with the Academy for Healthcare Sciences to deliver a BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology) programme.
 - From seeking further clarification we noted the education provider's reflection on monitoring their engagement with professional bodies. The education provider noted that their Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) Review committee, which is part of the Higher Education Meeting structure, ensured staff maintained up-to-date registrations and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements. We noted they did this working with their Human Resources (HR). Due to the the education provider delivering Higher Education in a Further Education setting, they only worked with a small number of PSRBs. For Health and Health Science programmes, the Health Professions and Nursing committee reported to the Higher Education Academic Board. This committee has a standing agenda item on PSRBs to provide updates and changes to standards for programme leads.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's initial reflection and further clarification received and have determined they have performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: The visitors noted the education provider achieved TEF Gold, with the top-level judgements for Student Experience and Student Outcomes both being Gold. The education provider is one of only three large FECs in the country to achieve a gold rating for all three aspects, and one of only 26 HE providers nationally, including all types of HE provider. The TEF review team found the education provider to have seven outstanding quality features and five very high-quality features. The visitors commended this and considered it good practice.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - The education provider examined the policies and procedures in place, to ensure compliance and to facilitate any necessary modifications to the curriculum. They analysed core skills and competencies of lecturers and module leads to ensure that each staff member teaching the modules covering the new standards of proficiency would possess the requisite expertise and experience in the subject matter.
 - Staff attended HCPC led webinars and once understood took to internal and external stakeholders. They also used feedback from graduates to understand weaknesses in the old curriculum.
 - The education provider also obtained the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) status from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) as a sign that their programmes are aligned to the employer-led standards for Hearing Aid Dispenser.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and have determined they continue to perform well in this area.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - In addition to their reflection on how the education provider made changes to reflect the revised standards of proficiency, they also noted they reviewed the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements issued by the QAA for Higher Education. This represents what graduates might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their studies, making sure that learners can progress in their education.
 - The education provider noted that the comprehensive review of guidance from professional bodies has helped them to ensure the curriculum was updated to stay relevant with evolving standards in hearing aid dispensing. Collaboration with stakeholders and regulators ensured successful implementation of these changes. New teaching materials and modules were created to provide learners with the necessary skills and knowledge for their careers and further education.
 - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**

- The education provider explained that they have revamped practice-based learning modelling and the requirement to be a practice assessor and practice educators to align with the revised HCPC standards.
- There are expectations that hands on clinical and development of skills occurs earlier on the programmes. Appointed member of staff led on practice-based learning delivery, and dedicated point of contact. The education provider introduced an open, centralised system for learners to apply for practice-based learning. This helped to ensure fair distribution and maximising opportunities for practical experience in different healthcare settings (NHS, independent and corporate private practice). The education provider also introduced simulation lab sessions and are looking to host own clinics to gain further exposure and hands on experience, which has led to increase in practice-based learning capacity.
- The visitors were satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners –**
 - The education provider noted that learner voice and feedback was gained via a variety of methods including induction surveys, early and end-of-module reviews, programme committee meetings and learner consultative forums with elected programme representatives. They used the 'you said, we did' approach to reflect actions in response to feedback.
 - Learner feedback was also gathered through representative at programme committee meetings and other forums. We noted learner representative also attended other internal quality processes within the education provider.
 - The education provider recognised that apprentices often struggled to engage with in person feedback opportunities due to their work commitments. To address this, they changed the structure to include forums at different times of the day and now have a Microsoft Team's forum for representatives to feedback as and when they need to rather than waiting for an in-person forum. The education provider is also planning to have a member of the Higher Education Quality team drop in to visit cohorts at least once a term to give them additional opportunity to raise concerns or feedback to someone outside of the programme team.
 - There is a three-step process in place to deal with complaints and all feedback is responded to and actioned where possible, and if not, an explanation provided as to why not.

- We considered it best practice to have a liaison committee that meets at least twice a year. Effectiveness of this was evidenced in the education provider's NSS scores.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined they have performed well in this area.
- **Practice placement educators –**
 - The education provider reflected on the changes they have made to their programmes in relation to practice educators. They noted the creation of a placement educators forum, creation of specific training material, and offering individual coaching sessions to those new to the role.
 - They noted they have a regular Practice Learning Committee that brings together practice educators from across professions to discuss opportunities and challenges in relation to practice-based learning across healthcare provision.
 - The education provider also noted they have developed a comprehensive training material to address the updated regulations pertinent to placement educators. However, they noted attendance at the committee meetings continue to be a challenge but are considering ways to increase attendance. They mentioned there was a suggestion to provide members with an MS Form to complete prior to the meeting to ensure any feedback is heard from practice partners if they were unable to attend the meeting.
 - We also noted the train-the-trainer CPD sessions were provided to practiced educators. Clear instructions on what clinical skills they need to have to teach or observe learners during practice-based learning were also given.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and have determined they have performed well in this area.
- **External examiners –**
 - The education provider noted they have regular communication with their external examiners. They noted they adhered to institution policy and regulations, maintaining open communication, requests for review of assessment, amendments and request for review of module minor changes.
 - We noted the feedback received from the external examiner played a pivotal role in refining assessments and modules. It was understood that their perspective helped ensure programmes remained current and met the evolving requirements of the profession.
 - By actively involving external examiner and maintaining open lines of communication, the education provider reflected that they ensured programmes remained responsive to regulatory changes and industry needs. The education provider noted they have mutually beneficial relationship with their external examiner.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined they have performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: the visitors considered it sector best practice to have a practice liaison committee that meets at least twice a year. This effectiveness was also evidenced in the education provider's NSS scores.

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learner non continuation:**
 - The education provider explained that they do not yet have this data from HESA, Therefore, they have explored the internal proxy measure of programme completion which is returned in the ILR.
 - They noted non-continuation data is still reliant on internal data sets from the ILR. They reflected that non-continuation has remained unstable due to the growth in learner numbers and balance of higher apprentices and those on student finance. However, they noted they have put measures in place to support learners' success.
 - The internal data provided showed non-continuation rate was 14.29% in 2022/21 but has since been reducing in the following years with a rate of 5.26% in 2022/23. We note that learner numbers have also increased with 28 learners in 2020/21 and 108 in 2022/23. As outlined in [quality theme 2](#), we understood the education provider had identified the high non-completion rate and taken steps to address it which was reflected in the reduction seen across the years.
 - From their initial review and quality activity, the visitors were reassured that the education provider continues to monitor their completion rate. The visitors therefore determined that the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
 - Despite the lack of programme level data for the FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology programme, anecdotal evidence would suggest that most if not all learners go on to continue in their current employment or seek higher level employment opportunities within the sector. The education provider noted that the majority of learners were recruited onto the FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology programme. They were recruited as higher apprentices who were already working within an audiology environment and were retained by employer following completion of programme.
 - The education provider reflected that graduation outcomes record what graduates are doing 15 months after graduation, which for a Foundation Degree learner, will be just three months after finishing their Bachelors top-up. Therefore, they may not be engaged in their graduate career at this point.
 - The visitors noted the education provider had performed at levels higher than the benchmark despite the nature of their provision. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider had performed well in this area.
- **Learner satisfaction:**

- The education provider reflected that even though overall satisfaction was slightly below benchmark at 74.8% compared to a benchmark of 75.1%, the approach to learner voice was rated as 'outstanding' by the OfS within their TEF report and supported their Gold TEF award.
- We also noted that specific NSS data from 2022/23 on audiology provided a high satisfaction rate with scores consistently above 80%. The education provider reflected that learner voice was embedded throughout their internal quality assurance processes, including through module reviews, learner perception questionnaires and learner consultative forums. They noted these in-year learner voice mechanisms supported them in responding to any learners' concerns in a timely way.
- The visitors were satisfied that the education provider had performed well in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
 - The education provider reflected that cohorts increased slightly in size due to employer demands, however they have intentionally kept small to enable consistency across grouping and learner experience. Additional staff have been recruited enabling added capacity for more learner blocks at any one time on campus.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and determined they have performed well in this area.
- **Proposal for supplying data points to the HCPC:** The education provider has externally sourced data from HESA for outcomes for those who complete programmes and learner satisfaction. However, this is not currently available for learner non-continuation. If the education provider engages with our proposed plan for supplying data points to the HCPC, they should be able to establish how they will supply quality and performance data points which are equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations in future reviews.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval or focused review process).

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Development around interprofessional learning

Summary of issue: The education provider is introducing a new approach to how they deliver interprofessional education. They noted that for the 2024/25 timetables, interprofessional collaborative practice will be included, with master class activities supporting this collaboration. As this is a new development the visitors have referred

this area to the next performance review in the 2025-26 academic year to understand how it has progressed.

Resourcing members on to the Patient, Carer and Service User group (PCSUG)

Summary of issue: We were informed that the responsibility for enhancing this group has been assigned to the Practice Learning Coach role, which interacts with all health-related learners and supports PCSUG by collating and distributing information. The visitors noted that service user and carer involvement has been identified as a challenge and there are plans in place to move responsibilities to alternative line management. To ensure this has been embedded and is effective the visitors have referred this area to be reviewed at the education provider's next performance review in the 2025-26 academic year.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report

Reason for next engagement recommendation

- Internal stakeholder engagement
 - The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider were learners, service users, partner organisations, practice educators, and external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
 - The education provider engaged with a number of professional bodies. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision
 - The education provider engaged with other relevant professional or system regulator(s) such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the General Dental Council, Office for Students and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. They considered the findings of other regulators in improving their provision.
 - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply
 - The majority of the data for the education provider is available through key external sources.
 - The education provider has not established how they will supply some quality and performance data points which are equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations. Where data is not regularly supplied, we need to understand risks by engaging with the

education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years)

- What the data is telling us:
 - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.
- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a two-year monitoring period is:
 - The lack of comparable data supply across all three areas that were assessed. Although the education provider has now established two out of the three data points we use in our assessment, we require them to have all three data points established to be considered for a longer review period. In addition, this data needs to be externally verified before submission to us upon agreed timeframes. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance across all themes and have not identified any significant risk.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out as outlined in Section 5 above.

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report.

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on the next steps for the provider. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation (including their reasons) and any referrals.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Review period recommendation	Reason for recommendation	Referrals
University Centre South Devon	CAS-01396-P2J7V9	Robert MacKinnon Joanna Finney	Two years	The lack of comparable data supply across all three areas that were assessed. Although the education provider has now established two out of the three data points we use in our assessment, we require them to have all three data points established to be considered for a longer review period. In addition, this data needs to be externally verified before submission to us upon agreed timeframes. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance across all themes and have not identified any significant risk.	<p><u>Development around interprofessional learning</u></p> <p>Summary of issue: The education provider is introducing a new approach to how they deliver interprofessional education. They noted that for the 2024/25 timetables, interprofessional collaborative practice will be included, with master class activities supporting this collaboration. As this is a new development the visitors have referred this area to the next performance review in the 2025/26 academic year to understand how it has progressed.</p> <p><u>Resourcing members on to the Patient, Carer and Service User group (PCSUG)</u></p>

					<p>Summary of issue: We were informed that the responsibility for enhancing this group has been assigned to the Practice Learning Coach role, which interacts with all health-related learners and supports PCSUG by collating and distributing information. The visitors noted that service user and carer involvement has been identified as a challenge and there are plans in place to move responsibilities to alternative line management. To ensure this has been embedded and is effective the visitors have referred this area to be reviewed at the education provider's next performance review.</p>
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Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology	FLX (Flexible)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/01/2020
FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology	FT (Full time)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/01/2020
Hearing Aid Audiology Bridging Programme	FLX (Flexible)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/11/2020
Hearing Aid Aptitude Test	FLX (Flexible)	Hearing aid dispenser			01/01/2021