
Performance review process report

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2018 - 2021

Executive summary

This report covers our review of how the British Association of Sports and Exercise Sciences has performed in the period between 2018 and 2021.

Through an initial review of documentary evidence, followed by engagement with quality activities, the visitors were able to gain reasonable assurance that the provider and its programme are performing well in most areas that were covered in the review. However, because of the absence of different data sets which should support the provider's position and due to the infancy of their programme, the visitors recommended a two-year monitoring period which means the provider is due to engage with the performance review process in the academic year 2023-24. The visitors considered that this would allow for developmental feedback as the programme and feedback loops continue to develop.

This report will now be considered by our Education and Training Committee who will make the final decision on the review period.

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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:

Ruth Baker	Lead visitor, clinical psychologist
Rebecca Khanna	Lead visitor, occupational therapist
Manoj Mistry	Service User Expert Advisor
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer

We would normally appoint at least one registrant from the modality, but due to availability issues, we were not able to for this review. The lead visitors were

selected on the basis of their roles as experienced educationalists rather than subject matter experts. One of the visitors is a practitioner psychologist registrant partner. Both visitors are appropriately trained and experienced in HCPC process application and standards. We were content with this set of visitors because the performance review process does not require a level of programme scrutiny that would require us to have a subject matter expert in the assessment panel. Rather, the process looks at how the education provider has performed at institution level around a number of themes as detailed in [Section 4](#) below.

In addition, we had the option to bring on board a sports and exercise psychologist if the lead visitors felt they needed to, if they identified anything that needed exploring outside of their scope of practice. Such need was not identified for this review.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers one HCPC-approved programme across one profession. It is a professional body and has been running their only HCPC approved programme since August 2019.

The provider has a unique role of being an education provider and also the professional body for Sport and Exercise Science in the UK. BASES offer an independent training route to professionals via their Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation route (SEPAR) programme. This is a fairly new provider and there are no referrals from previous assessments.

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	Practitioner psychologist	Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2019

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 programmes.

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
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Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	50	25	05/07/2022	The total number of learners currently enrolled onto the programme is below the benchmark. The programme takes in two cohorts in February and August each year. Although approved for up to 50 learners a year, the programme has not recruited up to this number in previous years but continue to experience steady increase. The visitors noted sufficient evidence to demonstrate the programme continues to be adequately resourced.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	0%	2022	This data point was supplied by the education provider and it is based on cohorts who have been eligible to complete the programme. The visitors considered this demonstrates the provider is performing well in this area.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	N/A	N/A	Data point not available as provider is non-HEI. The visitors considered this as a reason towards their recommendation of two years review period.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data point not available as provider is non-HEI. The visitors considered this as a reason towards their recommendation of two years review period..
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data point not available as provider is non-HEI. The visitors considered this as a reason towards their recommendation of two years review period.

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 – ensuring security of the provision in the future

Area for further exploration: We noted some speculation on the nature of the sector was stated in the portfolio, including the need to be agile in responding to market influences i.e. endorsement routes. However, we were unable to find information regarding the education provider's strategic intention, reflections and responsiveness to operating conditions over the period of the portfolio/now/in the future.

In addition, the provider noted they have had progressive developments and successes, one of which was the increasing number of learners on the programme. Although the programme was approved for 50 learners in 2020, it had never recruited up to this number. However, the provider noted a steady increase over the years. It was unclear how growth had been sustained by suitably qualified members of staff. As the staffing position is unclear, we could not determine security of provision with supervisors/ practice-based learning and the sector.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested further information via email communication to show how progress against achievement of strategic objectives was monitored and future plans initiated. We considered this will reassure us of the future stability of the programme.

We also requested reassurance the provider had reflected on the staffing arrangements to ensure enough staff and how they will ensure staffing remained adequate over the next years.

Outcomes of exploration: Through quality activity, we understood that representatives on the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route Advisory Group (SEPAR AG) would be working closely with the supervisor and reviewer representatives on a 'horizon scanning' project. This will include projects on

employer requirements, global changes in the discipline, engagement with HEIs to determine learner output amongst other things.

We learnt that the programme was monitored constantly, including the number of accredited supervisors and reviewers. The SEPAR AG were also required to monitor and facilitate ongoing training for new and existing members of staff and to oversee all resources made available.

We also understood that the provider had a full-time Professional Standards Administrator and part-time (0.6) Professional Development Manager who administer and manage the programme and other endorsement / accreditation programmes.

Through the provider's response, we were reassured of the security of the provision particularly around staffing.

Quality theme 2 – partnership with the Open University regarding international applicants

Area for further exploration: Within the portfolio, we noted the provider's reflection on the partnership arrangement that was developed with the Open University in relation to admitting international applicants on to the programme. However, there was lack of clarity on how this worked so it was not clear how the education provider had performed in relation to this. In addition, we were unable to determine how the education provider monitored the organisations these learners were being placed with as part of practice-based learning..

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested an email clarification to understand how the provider had performed with regards to their partnership with the Open University to enhance admission of international applicants. Additionally, we asked the education provider to provide further clarity on how they monitored partner organisations where international learners were placed

Outcomes of exploration: We received further clarity on the arrangement with the Open University (OU), for third party verification of applications. We understood that for those international applicants, the OU conducted a mapping exercise to confirm the necessary underpinning psychology was in place and that the applicant could proceed. In cases where the applicant fell short, they were required to complete an appropriate course to meet the admissions criteria.

In addition, we noted the pre-application document which is a checklist for both UK based and international applicants that required applicants to confirm their supervisory arrangements to ensure they could meet the programme requirements.

We saw sufficient evidence that demonstrated partnership arrangements with other organisations were effective and therefore the education provider is performing well in this area.

Quality theme 3 – how academic and placement quality is ensured

Area for further exploration: In the education provider's Practice Learning and Supervisor documents, we saw clear expectations regarding quality assurance of placements. However, as the number of learners increased, alongside the number/range of placements it was unclear how assurance was taken regarding practice-based learning. We noted neither of the External Examiners appeared to make comment about placement learning and were therefore unclear of their reflections about the quality of practice-based learning.

In addition, we did not see sufficient information on audits, feedback, learner and supervisor feedback to determine how they changed regarding learning outcomes for different levels. In general, the reflection lacked clarity on how the quality of placements and the academic element of the programme was ensured. We were also unclear how supervisors and reviewers kept up-to-date with their training.

We were also unclear about the review of curriculum. We could not determine whether the curriculum had been reviewed during the review period.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: To address the areas highlighted above, we sought clarification via email communication to allow the provider to elaborate on previous information they had sent.

Outcomes of exploration: As the provider and the programme gained approval only three years ago, we understood that the first set of learners had just submitted their final profile for review so there had not been an opportunity for the External Examiners to report on practice-based learning. The provider however acknowledged that ongoing assurances for the practice-based learning environments could be enhanced. There is expectation for External Examiners to pick up issues relating to quality of placements and the provider was willing to share once available. This will be taken forward when the provider next engages with our performance review process, through standards HCPC requirements.

We also understood that Supervisor and Reviewer Reps both had arranged forums where they provided feedback. Following their initial training, both supervisors and reviewers were required to engage with relevant training forums. They were also expected to complete some additional training in order to retain eligibility to supervise.

Assessment moderation was achieved via regular reviewer training events. For example, the reviewer representatives on the SEPAR AG organised bi-annual events for reviewer calibration.

We were satisfied with this clarity and took assurance academic quality continues to be ensured but will review how placement quality continues to be ensured, in the provider's next performance review.

Quality theme 4 – how interprofessional education (IPE) was delivered and reflected upon

Area for further exploration: Within the portfolio, we noted the intention for how IPE was to be experienced was stated. However, the vision for IPE, rationale and

purpose in the context of Sport/Exercise Science was unclear from the documents provided. The provider's reflection on IPE did not provide a clear definition as it relates to this provider or the anticipated benefits in relation to the sector, alongside future developments. Therefore, we could not understand how supervisors/mentors encouraged IPE and how it was recognised/assessed. We considered that to assess the performance of the provider in this area, it was useful to understand how the taught element of IPE was facilitated and reflected upon.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: To have a better understanding of how IPE was delivered and reflected upon, we requested additional information via email communication.

Outcomes of exploration: We were referred to the education provider's website where we saw Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events and conferences that were available from a variety of professions relevant to the sport and exercise psychologist that learners worked with as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Also, we noted, as part of the competency framework, learners through study, experience and supervision were able to explore psychologically informed environments (PIEs).

We saw sufficient evidence that demonstrated to us that the provider had reflected upon the delivery of IPE and we were reassured that they continue to perform well in this area.

Quality theme 5 – how equality and diversity requirements were made clear to learners and supervisors

Area for further exploration: Within the portfolio, we saw clear intention and processes outlined around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and these being monitored by the Board and the Advisory Group. We also saw demonstration of feedback leading to additional training being commissioned which demonstrated good reflection. However, it was unclear how the education provider ensured learners and supervisors were clear about equality, diversity and inclusion.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested additional information that provided a clear understanding of how the provider ensured equality and diversity requirements were made clear to both the supervisors and the learners.

Outcomes of exploration: In their response, the education provider made it clear that a specific Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training had been launched for all learners and that there are already discussions taking place regarding further EDI training opportunities for learners, supervisors, and reviewers. The provider noted that at the time of writing, the programme is the only global sport and exercise psychology training route to include "mandatory EDI training". This aligns with our Standards of Proficiency (SOP 5) which requires registrants to be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice. We noted learners were required to evidence their competence in the EDI knowledge.

In addition, the provider also highlighted a number of successes that their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group had achieved since their formation in May 2020. This included:

- creating a new EDI page in the member-only website to share key documents and updates; and
- creating an EDI definitions document as a support tool for current provider members amongst others.

Through the quality activity, we were satisfied that the provider had established means of ensuring both learners and supervisors understood EDI requirements.

Quality theme 6 – impact of Covid-19

Area for further exploration: From our review of the portfolio, we saw that responsiveness to learners' situations led to equitable extension for about six months. Necessity had driven online/e-learning modalities and the provider had developed creative ways to evidence learning by the learners. However, we were unclear how this learning was/is being converted into recognised and sustainable changes in practice.

Without feedback loops, we considered it was difficult to know how this had been experienced and what the education provider had learnt as a staff group, learner feedback, supervisor feedback on the impact of Covid-19, for the future.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested further information via email communication to demonstrate how the nature of portfolio evidence, as well supervision methods, was/is being developed in response to the impact of Covid-19.

Outcomes of exploration: From the provider's response, we understood the programme was always designed to have an online portal for the submission of learner evidence. As such, the creative methods for evidencing competence had been supported and extended in that learners are now required to provide short videos to detail their competence profiles. The provider explained that Covid-19 had facilitated the skilling up of learners/supervisors. This was achieved through competency with online skills/delivery which had been either organic or from the demands of working during Covid-19 and had positively influenced enhanced learner development.

We also understood that learning was assessed, amongst other things, by ongoing observations from supervisors, reflections, client evaluation, and external examiner feedback. We saw that the provider had reflected on the impact of Covid-19 on their provision, but this was limited since the programme had only run for a short period of time and due to lack of External Examiner report on practice. However, we are content with how the provider performed in this area.

Quality theme 7 – how technology was used to change learning, teaching and assessment methods

Area for further exploration: We noted that the education provider's reflection on the creative methods being used to present evidence of learning, teaching and assessment methods. However, it was unclear based on existing documentation

- what was being assessed;

- the method of communication/presentation; or
- the content.

We could not determine the extent to which reviewers had been advised of the weighting of presentation method versus content of portfolios.

We also noted lack of detail around the reason for the change in requirements for learners, for example the 5 minutes introduction of each submission.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought further clarification around marking guidelines being used by reviewers accommodating the presentation of assessments, since changes in practice have been required due to Covid-19. We also requested more information on how the education provider monitored absence or gaps with this technology.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider explained that increased use of technology had provided learners with an increased variety of providing evidence. They explained that the 5-minute video was an opportunity for the learner to introduce their portfolio and highlight specific development areas, or comment on specific difficulties. It also provided an opportunity for the reviewers to understand more about the learner rather than merely read submissions charting their training route. In addition, we were made aware that clarification on the feedback process had now been included in the programme Qualification Handbook.

Through quality activity, we saw the developments that had been triggered in learning, teaching and assessments, as a result of the changes in technology being used since Covid-19. We were satisfied with the changes and how the provider had managed them.

Quality theme 8 – assessments of practice education providers by external bodies and assessment by other professional regulators

Area for further exploration: The provider has a unique approach to how education and training is delivered and are not assessed by the relevant organisations responsible for assessing HEI providers. The provider did not submit any information on how they have been assessed by external bodies, during the review period.

Therefore, we were unclear how the provider:

- made sure assessment standards were assured to ensure they were fair, consistent and equitable;
- managed and organised practice-based learning;
- audited and created loop for learner feedback, how they accessed and learnt from it;
- ensured developments in the core related area of psychology were assessed; and
- utilised intelligence gathered from complimentary professional bodies is to inform the strategic direction and development in the delivery of the programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought out clarification on the above areas via email communication to allow the provider to answer the query.

Outcomes of exploration: From the provider's response to the quality activity, we understood the monitoring process was overseen by two independent external examiners (who also sat on the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation route Advisory Group (SEPAR AG)). The external examiners had access to all necessary documentation to ensure fair, consistent, and equitable assessment standards. The provider also explained that there are sector representatives on the SEPAR AG and welcomed HCPC's proposal to contact employers of the programme's graduates for feedback.

The provider highlighted the various feedback routes available to learners, including learner representatives who sat on the SEPAR AG; direct communication to the SEPAR AG; feedback gained as part of the mid-point e-meeting and the introduction of an annual review form.

We noted that although the provider was not assessed by external bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (in England) or professional bodies due to their unique nature, the provider continued to assess the quality of their provision via other means, mainly through External Examiners and the SEPAR AG. Therefore, we considered the provider has continued to perform satisfactorily in this area.

Quality theme 9 – curriculum development

Area for further exploration: We noted the provider is cognisant of HCPC SOPs on curriculum development. We also noted that existing approach for developing and evidencing competence as being appropriate were being explored by the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route Advisory Group with supervisors/mentors. However, the portfolio was not clear how the education provider had reviewed the curriculum, updated or audited the teaching and learning from supervisor and learners to ensure the currency of the curriculum.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We sought clarification on the points noted above via email communication. We considered this appropriate to have a clearer understanding of how the provider ensured curriculum development.

Outcomes of exploration: From the provider's response to the quality activity, we understood that all applicants admitted to the programme were required to complete an appropriate M-level qualification to demonstrate they met some competencies. Also, as the programme had only run for two years, it had not had many curriculum modifications other than the introduction of two new core training events.

We were satisfied with the provider's response but due to the infancy of the programme, we considered it useful to review soon after the programme had been further developed.

Quality theme 10 – practice-based learning (capacity and practice educators)

Area for further exploration: We noted the External Examiner reports around the capacity of practice-based learning. However, there was no evidence of learner feedback or placement audits. The education provider's reflection did not provide

information on supervisor feedback or annual reviews; therefore, it was difficult to assess the cycle of feedback and any subsequent changes. In addition, we noted within the current model, the provider did not have the responsibility of identifying practice learning setting for learners as learners were required to do this themselves. However, learner completion is contingent on having a variety of practice experiences to underpin assessment of a range of competencies.

Regarding practice educators, the provider identified inadequacies in the involvement of representatives (e.g. supervisors, alumni) to ensure the importance of placements, what can be achieved via placements, and the benefit of placements to such providers, was made known to them. The current portfolio did not appear to provide information regarding the involvement of representatives providing placements, for example for the mentors - in development, evaluation or their CPD.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We requested further evidence about how placements were audited, and how supervisors and learner feedback was used to improve the programme.

We also requested additional evidence that demonstrates how applicants were enabled to make an informed decision regarding their responsibility to source placement location(s).

To assure us of engagement with practice educators, we requested further information on how supervisors were involved in the quality assurance and continuous improvement of practice-based learning, including their own professional development.

Outcomes of exploration: We considered further information in the Placement Handbook regarding how placements were audited. We also saw that the education provider had reflected on the point around practice educators and were considering developing an educational material for supervisors, which would outline the programme and its varying regulatory expectations.

We were satisfied with the provider's response and were reassured that practice-based learning continues to be enhanced, both in terms of its capacity and its educators.

Quality theme 11 – involvement of service users and carers and learners in the programme

Area for further exploration: We noted the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route Advisory Group had stakeholder representatives in place. However, it was unknown to what extent the experience of end users accessing its services had resulted in improvements to the programme.

The provider also identified methods, which involved face-to-face methods, for providing feedback to learners and noted that only positive feedback had been provided. It was however unclear how learner voices were heard other than through face-to-face mechanisms with supervisors, mentors or the education provider.

We also saw no audits or placement audits from learners' perspective, as such, we could not assess the cycle of feedback and any subsequent reflections and change.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: To assess the effectiveness of the service user and carer group, we requested further clarity on the role of service users relevant to the programme, including how their input influenced ongoing development of the programme.

We also requested additional evidence demonstrating the methods for learner feedback that exist and how the outcome from this process had informed continuous improvement of the programme.

Outcomes of exploration: We were confident that the provider met our standard around involvement of service users and carers, when they were approved in 2019. However, as the programme had only run for two years, we understood that there had not been many opportunities for service user involvement. The provider noted part of the role of the SEPAR AG was to develop forums and host meetings which facilitated curriculum / training developments that are relevant to the sector.

Regarding learners, the provider intended to introduce exit interviews/questionnaires with their first completers amongst other ways of involving the stakeholder group. This is explored in more detail in Section 4, [Quality theme: Institution self-reflection](#). There is also a question in the mid-point meeting with reviewers that specifically asks learners about their experiences. The provider also mentioned a complaints process but this was yet to be used.

From this response, we saw that the provider was actively working to ensure stakeholder (service user and carers as well as learners) involvement in the programme continued to be effective.

Quality theme 12 – lack of data

Area for further exploration: As outlined in [quality theme 9](#), the provider's reflection lacked data points that should further enhance their performance. We also noted a lack of detail in the internal data provided. For example, there was minimal information provided about feedback loops and learning from cohorts/supervisors/end users as the year moved forward. It was unclear from the submission how the education provider utilised data analytics to inform planning or enhancement of the provision.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: The visitors requested additional evidence to demonstrate how the education provider utilised data to inform quality monitoring of the provision and future planning.

Outcomes of exploration: The visitors understood as, the programme had been running for only two years, there is little information available. However, they were reassured this is on the provider's agenda and there had not been any issues raised so far. Further details of how the lack of data has influenced the visitors' recommendation on the review period is provided under [Data and reflections](#) in Section 4.

Section 4: Summary of 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 is a relatively new provider to HCPC approval, with their only HCPC-approved programme, commencing in August 2019. However, since commencement, they have reported several developments and successes, particularly in terms of the numbers of current and proposed learners, which they assert have given them good financial stability.
 - As outlined in [Quality theme 1](#), the provider has developed ways to ensure a continuous growth in the number of learners as well as accredited supervisors and reviewers to further ensure the sustainability of the provision. One of which is the introduction of the SEPAR AG who are responsible for monitoring the stability of the provision.
 - With the growth of the programme being monitored constantly, coupled with the consistency in recruiting appropriate supervisors and reviewers, as well as ensuring adequate resources, this demonstrated the provider was performing well in this area.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - The provider has partnership arrangements with varying sporting, exercise and health organisations. They have also established relationships with varying bodies such as the British Psychological Society, UK Anti-Doping and Mind with whom they have Memorandum of Understandings which will help further their partnership and provide relevant additional training opportunities.
 - As noted in [Quality theme 2](#), the provider has a partnership arrangement with the Open University (OU), where the OU assists with third party verification of applications in an effective way. They are also continuously developing wider collaborations with other organisations such as Clinical Exercise Psychology UK and Science Council.
 - The visitors noted sufficient evidence to demonstrate the provider was performing well in this area.
- **Academic and placement quality –**
 - The education provider has support from a range of organisations and stated this has helped them to develop and deliver a “rigorous and contemporary” training route for professionals who wish to become sport and exercise psychologists.

- The education provider continues to develop partnerships with relevant organisations such as the Association of Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) and the Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology (DSEP) to ensure the quality of their provision.
- Through continuous improvement of the programme, regular training for both supervisors and reviewers, and partnerships with relevant bodies, the visitors noted and were satisfied, the academic and placement quality has facilitated improvements to the programme as well as the provider. This information demonstrated the provider was performing well in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
 - The education provider considers different ways of ensuring interprofessional education is available to all learners. One of the ways by which they do this is through their core training requirements whereby learners can learn with and from other psychology professionals such as health, clinical and counselling.
 - Alongside learning as part of a multidisciplinary team, the programme team is also keen to further develop workshops across the other areas of the provision within the provider.
 - Through initial documentary review and quality activity, the visitors noted the education provider is making effort to improve on how they ensure learners can learn with and from other professionals. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied the education provider was performing well in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - Due to the relative infancy of the programme and the impact of Covid-19, there has been limited activities around service users and carers. However, the SEPAR AG continues to engage end-user/stakeholder representatives within its membership.
 - Policies relating to service users are available to supervisors. The provider is now looking into ways by which service user feedback can be collected in greater detail and for any necessary actions to be reported and decided upon at the SEPAR AG.
 - The visitors noted the provider's approach to service user and carer involvement was still in development. Given the programme is still maturing, they considered the provider is performing well in this area but expect an increased level of service user involvement by the provider's next performance review.
- **Equality and diversity –**
 - The provider has a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor Group, formed in May 2020. EDI continued to be monitored and there was evidence of how feedback had led to commissioning of additional training. All EDI policies are reflected in the necessary candidate, supervisory, and placement documentation.
 - To supplement the EDI data, the provider has formed a Criminal Convictions and Applications Review Panel (CCARP) that includes the Executive Director, a Non-Executive Director, Chair – Division of Psychology, Chair – SEPAR Advisory Group, and Chair – Integrity Advisory Group, to consider issues relating to inclusion and non-standard applications.

- Through quality activity, the visitors saw sufficient evidence that demonstrated the provider was performing well in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - To ensure the programme aligns with HCPC competency requirements, documentation updates are carried out on an annual basis.
 - SEPAR AG has increased its membership to cater for alumni members, and there are active supervisor and reviewer networks via their respective representatives. Decisions about further core training required for learners will be considered and informed by the SEPAR AG in response to feedback and profession-related regulation.
 - Through the quality activity, as seen in [Quality theme 6](#), the visitors noted the provider had outlined projects in place around employer requirements, global changes in the discipline, and engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to determine the learner output on relevant programmes. The visitors also noted that as part of their horizon scanning, the provider ensures staffing level is adequate to ensure the programme continues to be properly managed. The visitors therefore were satisfied that long term challenges were being managed and there continued to be opportunities for development. This information demonstrates the provider was performing well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Impact of Covid-19 –**
 - The main impact of Covid-19 was the inability to observe supervisees in face-to-face live practice. However, this was overcome with the use of technology via on-line sessions and observations. Despite disruptions to most sport and/or exercise activities, many learners were able to refocus their training to ensure other areas of the portfolio were developed.
 - As part of the provider's approach to managing the impact of Covid-19, learners were given the opportunity to apply for a 'no questions asked' 6-month extension to their programme, at no extra cost. A number of individuals opted to use the extension and have since 're-entered' and are on-track to complete within the new time frame.
 - The visitors understood both from initial documentary review and through the quality activity as seen in [Quality theme 7](#) that, by using different innovative methods, the provider had been able to enhance how learners evidence competence and as such, they were satisfied that the impact from Covid-19 had positively influenced enhanced learner development. This information demonstrated the provider was performing well in this area
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**

- The programme was always designed in a manner to use technology for its submission and assessment processes.
- Given the Covid-19 pandemic, the provider continues to use technology and its wide-ranging applications. This has become more widespread and now significantly underpins candidate practice, practice observation, supervision, and core training delivery.
- As outlined in [Quality Theme 8](#), the increased use of technology, particularly since the pandemic, has provided learners with an increased variety of providing evidence. For example, a 5-minute video provides an opportunity for the learner to introduce their portfolio and highlight specific development areas, or comment on specific difficulties.
- The visitors noted that through the increased use of technology, the provider gives learners opportunities to be creative by using different methods of presentation to demonstrate competencies. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the provider had been able to develop their programme in line with changing technology. This demonstrates the provider was performing 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: We recognised how the education provider used different innovative methods, for example the five-minute video, to enhance how learners evidence competence. We considered this good practice.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
 - The provider noted they are not assessed against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. However, they are putting measures in place to ensure appropriate cascading of information and training through the representative networks. The provider’s monitoring process is overseen by two independent external examiners (who also sit on the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route Advisory Group) and have access to all necessary documentation to ensure fair, consistent, and equitable assessment standards.
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies –**
 - The provider stated this is not applicable. We consider the education provider’s review of external bodies’ assessment of practice education providers essential. This would inform the education provider’s view of whether practice-based learning is of good quality. As the provider did not submit any reflection on this, it remains an area for us to reassess when next they engage with the performance review process.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes –**
 - The provider stated this is not applicable.
- **Office for Students monitoring –**

- The provider stated this is not applicable.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - The provider stated this is not applicable to them.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: As the provider submitted no data to support their performance in the above areas, we considered this a risk, hence the recommendation of a two-year review period.

We recognise that not all providers will be included in external data returns from the sources above. However, to remain confident with provider performance, we rely on regular supply of data and intelligence to help us understand provider performance outside of the periods where we directly engage with them. Therefore, in a situation like this, where sufficient data points are not available, the maximum length of time we will allow between performance review engagements will be two years. This is so we can continue to understand risks in an ongoing way where data is not available.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - There have been no significant curriculum developments in relation to the required competency areas since the commencement of the programme. However, feedback from varying structures (such as external examiners, learners, reviewer, supervisor, alumni, and end-user representatives) remain key to any competence/curriculum related developments.
 - Feedback has also led to the development of workshops which provide learners with threshold level knowledge-based competence in the early stages of their programme.
 - As outlined in [Quality theme 10](#), the visitors understood that although there has not been curriculum modifications within the review period, there was reassurance that any future curriculum developments will be fed through the appropriate avenue in addition, the visitors were reassured that learners admitted to the programme would have fulfilled the necessary requirements which includes appropriate M-level qualification.
 - To fully reassure us of how the provider is performing in this area, we will refer this to future performance review when the programme has had opportunities to further develop the curriculum.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - As a professional body, the provider noted there have not been any specific developments which require them to reflect on changes that directly affect the programme.
 - The SEPAR AG reports to the Professional Standards Committee. Any changes in professional body guidance would be fed either up, or down, these channels with the provider's Professional Development and Partnerships Manager being central to any communications. The provider also noted that the HCPC's performance review process being

reflective in nature, would assist them to regularly monitor and evaluate challenges, developments and successes.

- This demonstrates the provider was performing well in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning –**
 - The provider identified complexities around placement capacity for learners on any sports and exercise psychology routes. Hence, the ongoing challenge with finding a variety of placements across all the competence areas.
 - During the pandemic, many placements were either 'postponed' or completed in alternative ways in response to the demands of the pandemic. However, the provider is now working with end user/stakeholders (via the SEPAR AG) and other representatives (such as supervisors, alumni) to ensure the importance of placements, what can be achieved via placements, and the benefit of placements to such providers, is made known. The provider also intends to use their supervisor training to ensure placement access is discussed prior to applicants confirming their registration on the programme.
 - Through documentation review, and quality activity, the visitors noted evidence that demonstrated the provider was performing 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: None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners –**
 - The education provider currently has two official 'operating' mechanisms for learner feedback. The first is via the learner representatives as members of the SEPAR AG who have an agenda item to report any specific feedback. The second is via the mid-point meetings held between the two reviewers and the learner (with their supervisor if they wish). The provider noted that only positive feedback had been received.
 - As outlined in [Quality theme 12](#), we understood learners will be asked to complete a 'SEPAR Candidate Annual Review Form' that provides an opportunity for them to provide feedback across their training journey. This will then be held by the education provider and reported at the SEPAR AG. In addition, the provider is also introducing exit interviews and questionnaires. Learners also have the opportunity to discuss their experience in the mid-point meeting with reviewers and there is also a complaints process.
 - The visitors noted there are different avenues for learners to feedback about their experience on the programme, including a complaint process. Therefore, they were satisfied the provider was performing well in this area.

- **Practice placement educators –**
 - Practice placement educators' feedback could be from a learner's supervisor, or an appropriately qualified mentor, who would then liaise with the supervisor.
 - All supervisors are required to confirm (and report on) a minimum number of observation hours of learners when 'practicing'. The provider noted this has been an effective means of monitoring given that learners are made aware of the varying reporting structures should there be any concerns.
 - Through documentation review, and the quality activity, the visitors noted sufficient evidence to demonstrate the provider was performing well in this area.
- **External examiners –**
 - The provider has two External Examiners (EEs) in place, who have provided positive feedback on the programme. The feedback also includes several examples of good practice and innovation. Some of these include:
 - extensive reviewer feedback provided to learners;
 - variety/flavour of comments provided to learners;
 - progression throughout the programme afforded to learners from the feedback provided by reviewers;
 - collaborative/partnership focus of the learner/reviewer relationship;
 - range of CPD provided to learners as part of their SEPAR journey;
 - In the review period, one of the EEs reflected on how learners are supported in workplace environment, both domestically and internationally. This related to how the provider makes the learner and supervisor relationship more visible, in terms of regularity, reflections on client-casework etc, to promote good practice. The provider's response to the EE's comment showed they had updated the guidance to ensure equity of experience across learners, and a consistent quality of service for end-users.
 - Through the evidence presented, the visitors were satisfied the provider was performing well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel: The visitors noted the use of data/benchmarking (i.e. closing the quality loop based on data to inform improvement plans) is in development given the programme is relatively new.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: Due to the absence in availability/application of data sets and because of the infancy of the programme, the visitors identified possible risk. The visitors also noted the provider advised some

internal quality assurance processes had not been fully reflected upon, due to the short length of time the programme had been running. The visitors considered these circumstances, could suggest a vulnerability to assuring the education provider's quality assurance controls, given these are in development and the provider is not part of a usual HEI network.

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).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Assessment of practice education providers to ensure quality of practice-based learning

Summary of issue: As noted in the sections above, the lack of evidence on how the education provider monitored the quality of practice-based learning via review of assessment by external bodies requires us to review this area again when the provider engages with the performance review process in 2023-24. This will give the provider sufficient time to allow for such assessments to be carried out and for them to reflect on how they have performed in this area.

Curriculum development

Summary of issue: As noted in the sections above, the programme did not record any significant curriculum development in the review period, so it has not been possible to make a judgement on how the provider has performed in this area. As such, the provider is required to include this referral in their reflection when next they engage with the performance review process in 2023-24. This would allow for opportunities for them to have further developed the curriculum.

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 2023-24 academic year.

Reason for this recommendation: As noted above, due to the absence of different data set and the maturity of the programme, the visitors considered it would be helpful to review the provider relatively soon. They considered this would allow for developmental feedback as the programme and feedback loops continue to develop and the programme's ongoing helpful reflective responses to this current review.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	First intake date
Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route	PT (Part time)	Practitioner psychologist	Sports and exercise psychologist	01/08/2019