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## Performance review process report

### Bangor University, Review Period 2018-2023

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#### **Executive summary**

This is a report of the process to review the performance of Bangor University. 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.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
    - Quality theme 1 – There was limited reflection on how academic quality was maintained and improved using processes in place. The visitors sought greater detail and reflection on how the education provider used those processes to maintain and improve academic quality.
    - Quality theme 2 – There was limited reflection on how practice placement quality was maintained and improved using process already in place. The visitors sought greater detail and reflection on how the processes in place have helped to maintain and ensure the quality of practice placement.
    - Quality theme 3 – The visitors noted that within the portfolio there was reflection on mental health as part of the curriculum. There was no information about how they ensure learners meet this SOP upon completion of the programme. The visitors requested further information with regards to how learners are supported and how the education provider ensures this SOP is embedded within the curriculum.
    - Quality theme 4 – The visitors sought greater reflection on how the education provider gathers external examiner feedback and uses this to improve processes and procedures.
  - The education provider should next engage with monitoring in five years, in the 2028-2029 academic year, because:
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- The visitors were satisfied with the overall performance of the education provider across the themes. Data shows the education provider is performing comparably to benchmark across the different areas. The education provider responds to recommendations from external regulators and professional bodies. There were no risks identified which could suggest the need for an earlier review.

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**Previous consideration** Not applicable. This is the education provider's first interaction with the performance review process.

**Decision** The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report.

**Next steps** Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:

- Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2028-2029 academic year.

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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:

Fleur Kitsell	Lead visitor, Physiotherapist
Mark Widdowfield	Lead visitor, Diagnostic radiographer
Prisha Shah	Service User Expert Advisor
Louise Winterburn	Education Quality Officer
Alexander Hudson Craufurd	Advisory visitor, Counselling psychologist

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. The performance review process does not always require profession level scrutiny which requires all professionals to be represented in the assessment panel. Rather, the process considers how the education provider has performed at institution level, linked to the themes defined in section 1. Lead visitors have the option to appoint additional advisory partners where this will benefit the assessment, and / or where they are not able to make judgements based on their own professional knowledge.

In this assessment, we considered we required professional expertise across all professional areas delivered by the education provider. We considered this because there were areas within the portfolio which the lead visitors could not make judgements on with their professional knowledge or expertise. These areas were thematic reflection, embedding the revised HCPC standards of proficiency, profession specific reflections and developments to reflect changes in professional body guidance.

## Section 2: About the education provider

### **The education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers four HCPC approved programmes across three professions. It is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1991. This includes one post registration programme for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotations.

The education provider engaged with the focused review process in the current model of quality assurance in 2022 and 2021 due to intelligence. On both occasions a decision was made that we had no requirement to investigate.

The education provider engaged with the approval process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2019 for a new PGDip Physiotherapy, full time programme. This involved consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme met our standards for the first time. After considering the education provider's response to the conditions set, we were satisfied that the conditions were met, and the programme was approved in 2019.

The education provider engaged with the major change process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2020 for changes to the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography, full time programme. The design and delivery of the curriculum was updated to reflect current practice. Modules were redesigned and refocused. The module credit values changed and there was a new practice-based learning audit process. There were changes to how the programme checks criminal records and its fitness to practice procedures and administration. We were satisfied there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the Education and Training Committee agreed the programme remains approved in 2020.

The education provider engaged with the major change process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2020 to inform us of an increase to learner numbers on the

programme, starting from September 2020. The most appropriate process to assess the increase to learner numbers was agreed to be through the annual monitoring process. The programme's first annual monitoring audit was due in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Through the major change process, the education provider informed us in 2020 that they intended to reorganise the Non-medical / Independent prescribing, part time programme. The changes to the programme affected the structure and content. We were satisfied there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the Education and Training Committee agreed the programme remains approved in 2021.

The education provider engaged with the annual monitoring assessment process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2019.

### 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
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2020
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1991
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2012
<b>Post-registration</b>	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2014

### 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<sup>1</sup>.

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

Data Point	Bench- mark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Numbers of learners	94	79	2023	<p>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 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 by reviewing information related to resourcing of the education provider's provision. We were satisfied their financial and resource planning/ modelling has ensured sustainability of their provision.</p>
Learner non continuation	3%	3%	2020-21	<p>This Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is 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 improved by 1%</p>



				<p>We did not explore this as the education provider's performance in this area is equal to the benchmark.</p>
<p>Outcomes for those who complete programmes</p>	<p>93%</p>	<p>82%</p>	<p>2020-21</p>	<p>This HESA data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered based on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 2%</p> <p>We explored this through the visitors' assessment of the education provider's reflection. The visitors were satisfied there are sufficient plans in place to address this area moving forward.</p>
<p>Learner satisfaction</p>	<p>77.3%</p>	<p>78.0%</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>We did not explore this as the education provider's performance in this area is above the benchmark.</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 processes have been used to drive improvements and maintain academic quality

**Area for further exploration:** In their portfolio, the education provider gave some information on the processes they use to maintain and improve academic quality. However, there was limited reflection in this area. The information provided focused on explaining the processes involved rather than reflecting on the outcomes of those processes. The visitors sought greater reflection from the education provider to gain a clear understanding of how quality assurance and enhancement models have successfully impacted academic quality.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this through email clarification and additional evidence as we considered this the most appropriate way to address the issue.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider submitted a detailed explanation of how they have taken one area of learner feedback regarding timing of exams, and the need for more practical sessions, to improve academic quality. They reflected that following feedback they spaced out timings of exams to give learners more time to prepare and to concentrate on other aspects of their programmes. They have also used the learner feedback to introduce more scenario-based sessions. Learners from different professional backgrounds are put into groups to work together in practical sessions. The education provider reflected that the feedback received since the changes were introduced have been positive.

The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's reflection and clarification and determined their concerns had been adequately addressed. We were therefore satisfied the education provider is performing well in this area.

### Quality theme 2 – Mechanisms in place for ensuring and improving quality of practice placements

**Area for further exploration:** In their portfolio, the education provider gave some information on the processes they use to ensure quality of practice placements. However, there was limited reflection in this area. The information provided focused on explaining the processes involved rather than reflecting on the outcomes of those processes. The visitors sought greater reflection from the education provider to gain a clear understanding of how they review the quality and experience of learners in practice placement. The visitors wanted to understand how they have used this information to drive placement quality improvements.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this area through email response from the education provider. We considered an email response would adequately provide the clarification that was required.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider described how they use the information gathered from learners in post placement debriefing sessions to respond to any changes needed. They also use local meetings with practice coordinators and programme leads attendance at All-Wales Practice Placement meetings for direct discussion around placement quality. Representation from all seven Health Boards are also involved in those discussions. The education provider also uses their annual clinical educators' short course which they run for practice placement colleagues as a mechanism to help maintain and improve placement quality. They underpin this with pre-placement training with learners on competencies and standards before they go out into their practice placements. Specifically on the Physiotherapy programme, the education provider submits an annual review to the professional body, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP), in which practice quality is reflected upon.

The visitors were satisfied there are a range of quality assurance processes in place for monitoring and improving practice placement quality. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

### Quality theme 3 – How learners develop skills to meet the revised SOP and manage their own mental health

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors noted that within the portfolio there was reflection on mental health as part of the curriculum. There was no indication about how learners are ensured that they meet the SOPs upon completion of the programme. The visitors therefore sought reflection on how the curriculum was changed to ensure that learners meet the SOPs when they enter the HCPC register. The visitors wanted to understand how the education provider ensured learners have the skills to be able to manage their own mental health in line with the revised SOP.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this area through email response from the education provider. We considered an email response would adequately provide the clarification that was required. We then followed up this response with an online Teams meeting to discuss this area further.

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their response, the education provider gave some further reflection and information on their approach to ensure that registrants can meet the revised SOPs. However, their reflections required some further clarity which was achieved via an online Teams meeting between the education provider, lead visitors and HCPC executive. The education provider explained that, in terms of their own mental health, learners are supported via mechanisms such as professional mentors and personal development schemes.

Updates to handbooks and new teaching sessions include guidance on when and how to manage their own wellbeing in relation to teaching and training. Changes have been made to enhance this theme, and to ensure learners meet the SOP. They did this through the revision and revalidation of modules to ensure that SOPs are firmly embedded within the learning outcomes. We understood that through personal development reviews with learners, academic staff are able to discuss mental health in relation to the SOP and this is also directly integrated into clinical competencies.

Following this, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's clarification and determined it had adequately addressed their concerns in this area.

#### Quality theme 4 – How the education provider gathers external examiner feedback and uses it to improve processes

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors noted that reflection on feedback and actions taken in response to external examiner comments was very limited within the portfolio. They wanted to understand how the education provider had reflected on feedback from external examiners and any changes or enhancements made in responding to external examiner comments and reports.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this area through email response from the education provider. We considered an email response would adequately provide the clarification that was required. We then followed up this response with an online Teams meeting to discuss this area further.

**Outcomes of exploration:** In their email response, the education provider gave some further reflection and information on their approach to responding to external examiner reports. However, their reflections required some further clarity which was achieved via an online Teams meeting between the education provider, lead visitors and HCPC executive. We understood they use a specific form called a QA1 form to reflect on changes made in response to external examiner feedback. This is then taken to the Curriculum Quality Assurance Delivery Group for discussion and action. We also understood that external examiners have access to the completed external examiner form from the previous year. The education provider reflected that this allows the current external examiners to check that recommendations or issues highlighted in the previous year have been followed up. They also reflected that self-monitoring and programme team monitoring is based on evaluative comments from

external examiners, learners, professional bodies, and other academic staff. They reflected that they have used these comments and reports to help design and integrate more authentic assessment types into their programmes.

Following this, the visitors were satisfied that the education provider is addressing external examiner feedback appropriately and working to improve on any areas highlighted. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

## 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 reflected on how they use their annual academic planning round to review current, ongoing, and future needs linked to programme delivery. This includes a review of staff student ratios, learner numbers and academic expertise.
  - They have increased the physical space for physiotherapy teaching facilities and have integrated greater simulation or virtual learning technology to supplement traditional teaching delivery. They have also invested in additional IT and computing facilities to support BSc Radiography teaching programmes. They did this in response to good numbers of learners applying to HCPC accredited programmes and offers provided to successful applicants.
  - Through clarification it was explained that Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) commission programmes delivered by the education provider. HEIW engage with them through learner and programme forums and contract meetings. This allows the programme leaders, learners, academic staff and practice supervisors / educators, the opportunity to feedback on programmes directly to HEIW. They reflected that the contract also offers some financial stability and sustainability going forward.
  - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider has performed well in this area. This is because their reflection and clarification showed that their financial and resource planning has ensured stability and sustainability of their provision. This is further supported by their contract with HEIW.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
  - The education provider reflected on how they work in partnership with HEIW and placement providers to support quality placement provision. They used the recommendations from a HEIW report to review and

evaluate how they utilise placements within partnership organisations, specifically for radiography learners. They did this to enable those learners access to tertiary centres which provide opportunities for higher levels of care than those provided in Wales. Further clarification received explained that the HEIW report sets out the increased demand for radiography placements and the need to have sufficient placement and supervision capacity within Wales. This is for learners on the Diagnostic Radiography programme. The report outlines the importance of sharing information with all practice areas in a consistent way, and to ensure parity of experience for learners in different placement settings.

- They reflected on how they work with Wrexham University to provide face to face support and guidance for radiography learners based at the Wrexham campus. They have an ongoing contract with Wrexham University to offer wellbeing support to all their healthcare learners in the Wrexham area.
- They intend to set up a School wide practice partnership group to address the challenges of working with different practice placement partners at different placement meetings. This will help to ensure consistency of information across placements and will increase collaborative working and the sharing of best practice.
- The visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in this area. This is because their reflection showed they have continued to manage existing partnerships whilst also seeking to developing new partnerships.
- **Academic quality –**
  - The education provider reflected on how they use learner and external examiner feedback as part of a continuous loop of quality assurance for all programmes. Programme and module leaders review module evaluations and take any actions forward for implementation in the following academic year.
  - The visitors noted that reflections in this section were focussed on a description of their academic processes, rather than a reflection on the outcomes of the processes. They sought the education provider's reflections on how processes have been used to drive improvements in academic quality. This was explored under quality theme 1.
  - Clarification received through quality activity reassured us how the education provider has considered this theme. We were satisfied that there are a range of quality assurance processes in place for monitoring academic quality.
- **Placement quality –**
  - The education provider reflected that they have an All-Wales Local Level Agreement in place with practice placement providers. This sets out the duties and expectations of each stakeholder. Placement audits are carried out jointly by members of academic staff and the practice placement provider.
  - They have a Joint Practice Education Quality Assurance Group (PEQAG) where meetings are held with representatives of nursing and midwifery from the Health Board to discuss and manage challenges and successes. The education provider plans to broaden the scope of

PEQAG to incorporate all programmes where learners have a practice placement.

- The education provider reflected on the challenges of accessing practice placement opportunities during the Covid pandemic. This meant that some learners were unable to complete their degree on time. In response, additional financial support was provided by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to enable all learners to complete outstanding practice hours as soon as they were able to access practice placement areas.
- The visitors noted the education provider's reflections in this area however they sought greater reflection on outcomes of processes, rather than a description of the process itself. This was explored under quality theme 2.
- Following this, the visitors were satisfied there are a range of quality assurance processes in place for monitoring and improving practice placement quality. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
  - The education provider has an institution wide interprofessional learning strategy. This is made up of three 30 credit modules which take place over the three years of undergraduate programmes. Modules are delivered sequentially over three years. Module content is delivered via a virtual learning platform as online materials or recorded lecturer capture. This is then supported by applied tutorial sessions within small groups of learners.
  - They have 'College of Human Sciences Teaching and Learning Strategy 2022-2025'. This sets out their commitment to developing cross collaborative teaching and learning and is aligned to their institution wide '2030 Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy'.
  - They reflected that their interprofessional learning strategy enables learners to acquire the knowledge and skills to move from learning about other professions to collaborating and working in interprofessional teams. To do this, learners are encouraged to reflect on their own collaborative ways of working and learning. The education provider explained how they use this learner-centred approach to enable learners to recognise the value of learning from past and current experiences.
  - Through clarification it was explained that they aim to produce a 'collaborative-practice ready workforce'. To achieve this, 50% of learning is embedded in Multi-Disciplinary Teams.
  - The visitors were satisfied the education provider has a range of interprofessional education opportunities across their programmes and they continue to respond to challenges. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
  - The education provider reflected on service user and carer engagement across their programmes. Service users are involved with recruitment and selection of learners, in curriculum development, and in teaching sessions. Service users and carers are also included at an advisory level to address areas of improvement to the programmes.

Their reflection suggests that the education provider understands the importance and value of involving service users and carers to enhance learner's experiences and outcomes.

- Service users are invited to participate as guest speakers in lectures, workshops, and seminars. They do this to provide learners with insight into the real experiences of patients and service users. Guest lecture sessions offer learners the opportunity to engage directly in order to gain a deeper understanding of the practical aspects of healthcare.
- Through clarification, we understood that service user sessions feedback into quality processes including the Annual Review of Teaching and Learning and feed forward into Development Planning Processes. These processes are overseen by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group. The task group meet regularly to discuss programme improvements, share insights, and identify areas where programmes can better align with the needs of patients and carers.
- The visitors were satisfied the education provider has identified ways to appropriately address the challenges relating to service user and carer involvement. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Equality and diversity –**
  - The education provider reflected on their developments in this area during the review period. They have appointed an Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion to support the development of equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) across the institution.
  - The 'Anti-Racist, Anti-Discrimination and Promotion of Cultural Humility Committee' (ARADPCH) is responsible for implementing and overseeing equality, diversity and inclusion across the institution by identifying different workstreams to focus on. Through the 'clinical workstream' they have developed and delivered anti-racist and anti-discrimination training for supervisors in clinical placements. The 'policies and procedures workstream' has developed guidance on intervention when racism and discrimination occurs in academic teaching. Both workstreams have allowed the education provider to identify issues and reflect on how they have been addressed.
  - Through clarification, they explained that their submission for Athena Swan Silver Award had identified gaps in EDI policy and procedures. To address this, the education provider appointed a new Learning and Teaching Development Leader and an EDI/Athena Swan development lead in each School. They have created new Equality Committees and have engaged with Gender Pay Gap reporting.
  - To foster a more inclusive culture on campus, the education provider has established an LGBTQ staff network, and have developed support policies for transgender staff and learners. They have also established a 'Disclosure Response' team and all academic staff receive training on responding to any disclosures of threat or violence.
  - The visitors were satisfied with how the education provider showed improvement to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion policies are complied with and developments made. Therefore, the visitors considered the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**



- The education provider reflected on the challenges of being flexible and responsive to the needs of the Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) commissioning body and workforce plans. They recognise the need to be flexible and agile in their response to new opportunities for developing programmes, in bidding for resources and tender opportunities.
- To meet these challenges, they have worked to develop Radiography programmes by expanding learner offers to include continuing professional development (CPD) in ultrasound training and education services. The Physiotherapy team have collaborated with the Centre for Dementia Research to develop ways of preventing and recovering from falls for those with dementia. They are also providing CPD opportunities for those working in the care sector.
- Moving forward, the education provider plans for academic staff undertaking PhD studies to explore topics related to programme specific pedagogy and the implementation of virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) to support learning. Findings will be embedded in providing interprofessional education for all programmes.
- The visitors noted the education provider's reflection appeared appropriate, highlighting the importance of HEIW commissioning and workforce plans. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's planning for long term challenges and opportunities. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing 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:**

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
  - The education provider reflected on how they were required to review the revised standards of proficiency (SOPs) for relevant professions. As many programmes had been recently created, most had been developed using the revised SOPs, and changes needed were therefore minimal.
  - The education provider stated that all staff who facilitate are registrants and should be fully aware of the significant changes to SOPs. They ensured awareness by examining the changes by comparing the SOPs against the new version. They engaged in staff training to discuss the changes in relation to curriculum delivery.
  - They reflected that learners are already engaged in material which focusses on promoting public health and preventing ill health. They also consider broader health elements throughout the curriculum. They therefore have not introduced a specific change in this theme. However, they recognise that this aspect of the curriculum would benefit from being highlighted more to learners. To assist this, they have developed workbooks for each module to make more apparent specific aspects of the SOPs.

- The education provider stated that they have not made changes as equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are already covered throughout programmes. EDI is a key feature in how they educate learners throughout the institution and in clinical practice. They embed EDI within interprofessional modules and address it within specific case studies and planned discussions throughout programmes.
- Through clarification, it was understood that in written assessment of clinical competencies, learners are required to describe and reflect on how they addressed issues of diversity and difference within their clinical work. A 'Clinical Workstream' integrates all aspects related to EDI assessed during practice placement. Their aim is to create a distinct meta-competency to ensure that the assessment of EDI received proper attention.
- The visitors noted that while there is discussion of content that mental health is in the curriculum, there was no indication given as to how learners are able to meet the new SOPs upon completion of their programme. It was important for the visitors to understand how the curriculum has changed to ensure that learners meet the SOPs when they enter the register. They wanted to understand how learners develop skills to be able to manage their own mental health in line with the revised SOP. We explored this under quality theme 3.
- The education provider reflected on their investment in simulation and virtual reality suites to support learners with digital skills. They recognise digital skills as a key aspect of programmes. All programme information, assessment guides, etc are all populated onto a virtual learning environment called Blackboard. The SOP is embedded within programme and module content and teaching sessions include the use of x-ray rooms, virtual reality and electronic based workstations.
- **Learning and developments from the COVID-19 pandemic –**
  - The education provider reflected on the difficulties in teaching, learning and assessment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. They reflected on how they adapted their thinking to change from seeing these issues as 'problems' and instead to 'challenges to overcome'.
  - In response they recognised a potential danger to learners was isolation and a lack of social contact which could lead to poor mental health and overall engagement. They implemented a series of wellbeing strategies for staff and learners to overcome this. They also recognised that equity and accessibility were important considerations during the pandemic. The digital divide impacted some learners, and additional support with equipment and training was needed to level the opportunity to learn.
  - The education provider reflected that the biggest changes gained from the pandemic were more diverse ways of working, greater collaboration and innovation and in resilience and crisis preparedness. They have adapted their ways of working into a hybrid or blended learning approach and continue to use this method of delivery, for example in personal tutor meetings or small group tutorials. They reflected that overall, the pandemic allowed them to reassess their teaching and learning and to appreciate how technology can be integrated and benefitted from.

- The visitors were satisfied the education provider successfully adjusted to the challenges of the pandemic, supporting learners and staff. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
  - The education provider reflected on their use of simulation in the curriculum across all programmes. They plan to implement more simulation skills in practice placement settings going forward.
  - They have reflected that they are in the early stages of working with artificial intelligence (AI) and are undertaking preparatory work with academic staff teams around plagiarism. AI analytics and its application will be integrated into the programme and learners will also be expected to discuss its use and applications within the clinical area, such as evaluating the ethics surrounding data and artificial intelligence systems in the healthcare environment. The education provider also reflects on how that they are preparing to embrace and work with the positive aspects of AI.
  - Learners are taught how to safely use professional communication on social media and given the opportunity to practice on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. For example, they learn that Twitter is a useful way of keeping updated while WhatsApp develops a sense of community and provides information on extracurricular activities. In this way the education provider has embedded digital literacy throughout their programmes. They have done this because areas such as assessment, medicine management, and calculations all expect learners to engage with different forms of digital technologies.
  - The visitors were satisfied the education provider has effectively embedded use of technology across their programmes, and assessments. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing 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 reflected they had not had a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) review during the review period. As a Welsh education provider, they are not governed by the Office for Students (OfS) but they do respond to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).
  - They reflected that the National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes for BSc Radiotherapy did not meet expectations during the review period. In response they developed key action plans which were submitted to, and approved by, HEFCW. The action plans included developing a more reflective approach to listening and acting upon key messages

and comments from learners. They have improved processes for learner engagement and have appointed a new Director of Student Engagement to work alongside the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education. Recent Pulse Surveys have shown a positive improvement in the overall learner experience because of the changes and developments made.

- The education provider also reflected that they adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards and are subject to the NMC annual self-reporting system. All their NMC accredited programmes have been approved to the most recent standards.
- The visitors were satisfied the education provider is responding appropriately to changes to ensure they comply with the QAA. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Performance of newly commissioned Allied Health Professional (AHP) provision in Wales –**
  - The education provider reflected on the challenges of integrating interprofessional education (IPE) modules within the new curriculum for the BSc Diagnostic Radiography programme. This is a long-standing programme delivered by the education provider and included in the HEIW contract following a review of non-medical education.
  - The education provider has integrated IPE modules across all professional programmes to include nursing, midwifery, radiography and dental hygiene. They did this to provide an opportunity to learn together about the different disciplines which form care delivery. The challenges they faced were around the different groups of learners together in one classroom with lecturers with specific expertise and professional practice coming together to form one cohesive group. The education provider reflected on the success of this and noted that learners have provide positive feedback on their experiences.
  - The education provider reflected they have good levels of interest and applications for both the Radiography and Physiotherapy programmes. Based on this, are able to achieve the HEIW commissioned numbers.
  - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's response in this area.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
  - The education provider reflected on their engagement with other regulators and professional bodies including the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP).
  - They reflected that since 2022, the independent prescribing programme has been mapped to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Competency Framework for all Prescribers (RPS). This has ensured a consistent approach to the assessment of trainee prescribers across all professions. It has also provided clear eligibility criteria for potential Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs), and particularly to non-medical DPPs.
  - The education provider reflected on the challenges of working collaboratively across Wales to produce local level agreements to support practice placement learning. The success, as a result, has been the development and delivery of a distance and a dispersed

learning route for nursing programmes. Both programmes share learning opportunities with the BSc Radiography programme.

- The education provider reflect that Professional and Statutory Reporting Body (PSRB) reports provided them with useful feedback about teaching, learning and assessment. All PSRB reports and the Department's response to them are received and reviewed by the Curriculum Quality Assurance Delivery Group. There have been no conflicts between professional body expectations and regulatory requirements.
- The visitors were satisfied the education provider is working effectively to communicate with and respond to other relevant professional regulators and bodies. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None.

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** none.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

**Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Curriculum development –**
  - A detailed narrative was submitted showing different developments around the curriculum for each programme. This was related to new and revised HCPC standards of proficiency (SOPs).
  - The education provider reflected that they used the HCPC SOPs briefing webinars, in advance of the changes being implemented, to discuss changes to the curriculum within team meetings. They then developed a plan to implement changes around key developmental themes based upon if the theme was already covered, partially covered, or in need of enhancement within the curriculum. They reflected that they ensured completeness by mapping the revised SOPs against the curriculum in a modular format. This was important as it allowed them to ensure SOPs were covered appropriately. They looked at how revised SOPs were integrated for new cohorts from September 2023 and how they actively reflected on programmes where no changes were required.
  - The BSc Radiography programme is well established and was revalidated in 2021 in line with the new SOPs. The education provider reflected that only subtle changes to delivery were made as key development themes already existed within the current curriculum. The Physiotherapy programme is still new, having its first cohort in 2020, therefore only small changes to the curriculum were required to address the revised SOPs. The Physiotherapy programme is commissioned by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and all changes to curriculum are discussed between them and the education provider.
  - The education provider reflected that Independent Prescribing programmes is mapped to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's (RPS)

Competency Framework for All Prescribers. The RPS framework reflects all the relevant changes to the revised generic SOPs, the revised physiotherapist SOPs, and the revised paramedic SOPs.

- The visitors were satisfied how the education provider is performing relating to this area as appropriate evaluation processes are in place involving a range of relevant stakeholders. The visitors were satisfied the education provider is continuing to respond to external influences on their curriculum development.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
  - The education provider reflected that since 2022, the Independent Prescribing programme has been mapped to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Competency Framework for all Prescribers. Through revalidation of the programme in 2021 the education provider made changes to the requirement that Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs) must meet the eligibility criteria identified in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Competency Framework for Designated Prescribing Practitioners. This was to ensure a consistent approach to the assessment of trainee prescribers across all professions.
  - Through clarification the visitors were able to understand that the Diagnostic Radiography programme has been approved by the College of Radiographers (CoR). This means that the programme meets professional body governance standards and is demonstrating equitable, fair and consistent standards.
  - The visitors were satisfied the education provider has reflected on developments to reflect changes in professional body guidance appropriately. They were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**
  - The education provider reflected on the challenge of increased demand for suitable Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs) due to the anticipated increase in learner numbers on both prescribing programmes.
  - From 2025 the education provider plans to use its own School of Pharmacy to begin to train pharmacists. Independent prescribing will be included in their pre-registration training, and so the demand for suitable DPPs will increase significantly again. In order to address these challenges, the programme team plan to raise awareness of the DPP role, particularly for experienced independent prescribers of all professions. They aim to do this by creating a video to be shared with their stakeholders. This will be in collaboration with the School of Pharmacy. They also plan to develop a short course for those who are interested in becoming a DPP.
  - The visitors were satisfied with how the education provider is performing 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 –**
  - Learners are a key part of the education provider's programme and module development and the approval process. Validation and revalidation panels include a 'Student Reviewer'. Learners are also represented via the Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLiC). This committee functions to facilitate open dialogue between staff and learners with a focus upon the learner experience.
  - The education provider reflected on the challenge of addressing concerns raised via learner feedback regarding the timing of exams and the need for more practical teaching sessions. To address this, the education provider separated the timings of the exams so that the calculations exam is sat earlier in the year and the safe prescribing exam is sat later in the year. They reflected that learner feedback, in response to these changes, was positive allowing learners to concentrate on different aspects of the programme at different times.
  - The education provider has also introduced more scenario-based sessions, where learners of different specialities and professional backgrounds, are placed in groups to work through prescribing scenarios. They have also incorporated practical skills into other taught sessions. Verbal and written feedback from learners on the changes to these sessions has been positive.
  - They reflected on the challenges of making learners aware of the changes to SOPs, particularly in the move from a passive to an active approach. They also reflected on the challenge of implementing the revised SOPs into curriculum delivery for new learners. The education provider firstly discussed and reviewed changes with programme teams to ensure all staff who facilitate learning fully understood the impact of the changes. They then conducted tutorials and teaching sessions with learners to highlight the changes and integrated them into a performance review system.
  - The visitors were satisfied how the education provider is performing relating to this area. They have processes in place to collect feedback from learners and take actions in response to that feedback.
- **Practice placement educators –**
  - The education provider reflected that practice placement settings are jointly audited by staff from the practice educator facilitator and academic members of staff. For example, the practice educator facilitator and a member of the Health Board radiography / physiotherapy team within the placement area.
  - They have a Joint Practice Education Quality Assurance Group (PEQAG) where meetings are held with representatives from the Health Board to discuss and manage challenges and successes. The education provider plans to broaden the scope of PEQAG to incorporate all programmes where learners have a practice placement.
  - The development and use of learner practice placement evaluations enables learners to raise any concerns they may have about their

practice placement area. Learners are also able to use the shared 'Escalation of Concerns Process' should they need to.

- The programme team have worked closely with their Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs) to clarify roles and responsibilities of the DPP role, as well as to ensure the processes and systems for delivering the role are not too time consuming. They have highlighted this as an example of a very positive change.
- The visitors were satisfied the education provider appropriately supported placement educators. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **External examiners –**
  - The visitors noted that reflection on external examiner feedback was very limited in this area. The visitors wanted to understand the education provider's reflections on feedback from, and actions taken in response to, external examiner comments and reports. It was important for them to understand how the education provider ensures that external examiner processes are functioning as intended and how good practice is identified. They wanted to understand if there had been any changes or enhancements in response to external examiner reporting. We explored this under quality theme 4.
  - The education provider explained that quality assurance and enhancement is aided by annual review and development plans, taken from individual modules, programmes and departments. Self-monitoring and team monitoring is based on evaluative comments from external examiners, learners, assessor and professional bodies, and other academic staff.
  - The Curriculum Quality Assurance Delivery Group, on behalf of the University, audits Schools on a 6-year rotating basis. This is to examine that all relevant processes and mechanisms for quality and standards are in place, operating effectively and efficiently, with recommended enhancements to teaching and learning. Any collaborative provision that a department or faculty is involved in will be included as part of the quality audit.
  - Following this, the visitors were therefore satisfied that the education provider is addressing external examiner feedback appropriately and working to improve on any areas highlighted. We were satisfied how the education provider is performing 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:**

- **Learner non continuation:**
  - Learner non-continuation rates are equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms.



- The education provider stated that they are continually seeking to improve learner retention rates through the attrition and retention policy. This includes which includes improved pastoral support and student services.
- The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's reflection showed that they have performed well in this area.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
  - The education provider's rate for outcomes for those who complete programmes was 82% when compared to a benchmark of 93% in 2020-2021 academic year. This suggests the education provider is performing below sector norms.
  - The education provider has implemented action plans to improve learner outcomes and improve differential attainment. An institution-wide strategy has been put into place to improve the number of good degrees awarded across the institution.
  - The education provider also reflected that the challenges of the Covid pandemic has been detrimental to the success levels for some, especially more mature learners, who found having to work at home and combine other responsibilities such as home-schooling challenging.
  - The visitors were satisfied there are sufficient plans in place to address this area moving forward.
- **Learner satisfaction:**
  - Learner satisfaction data is above the benchmark which suggests the education provider is performing above sector norms.
  - The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's reflection showed that they have performed well in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
  - The education provider is recruiting learners slightly below the level at which is it approved to do so. However, the visitors explored this by reviewing information related to resourcing of the education provider's provision. We were satisfied their financial and resource planning/ modelling has ensured sustainability of their provision.

**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).

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

## 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 2028-2029 academic year.

## **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 and carers, practice educators and Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW).
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
  - The education provider engaged with professional bodies. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision.
  - The education provider engaged with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). They considered the findings of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Nursing and Midwifery council (NMC) in improving their provision.
  - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply:
  - Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period.
- 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.

## **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 2028-29 academic year

**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
Bangor University	CAS-01402-R9R0J4	Fleur Kitsell Mark Widdowfield	Five years	The visitors were satisfied with the overall performance of the education provider across the themes. Data shows the education provider is performing comparably to benchmark across the different areas. The education provider responds to recommendations from external regulators and professional bodies. There were no risks identified which could suggest the need for an earlier review.	N/A

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
PGDip Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2020
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (D.Clin.Psy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/01/1991
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2012
Non medical / Independent prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014