

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Staffordshire University
Name of programme(s)	BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship, Full time
Approval visit date	03-04 September 2019
Case reference	CAS-14578-Z2L6B2

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Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Gary Dicken	Social worker
Susanne Roff	Lay
Robert Goemans	Social worker
Temilolu Odunaike	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit

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

Mark Savage	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Staffordshire University
Andrea Jones	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Staffordshire University
Vanessa Oakes	Internal panel member	Staffordshire University

Marek Hornak	Internal panel member (Employer Partnerships Representative)	Staffordshire University
Vicki Faulkner	External panel member	Brighton University
Jack Tomlinson	Student	Staffordshire University
Helen Challis	Observer	Social Work England
Rebecca Mulvaney	Observer	Social Work England

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Social worker in England
Proposed First intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02098

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we ask for certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes
Internal quality monitoring documentation	Not Required

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below,

we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	Met current and past learners from existing, approved BA (Hons) Social Work programme
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice educators	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 30 October 2019.

2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the admission process gives them enough information to make an informed choice about making an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the evidence submitted for this standard, including the apprenticeship handbook, the university's admissions policy and the Higher Education Institution (HEI) employer contract. From their review the visitors could see that the apprenticeship handbook contained all the information that the applicants will need to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. The visitors however noted from the mapping document, the HEI employer contract and from discussions with the senior team that the partner agencies are mostly responsible for deciding who comes on to the programme. In their mapping document, the education provider stated that applicants will be interviewed by partner organisations who will be

employing the learners, with support from academic staff delivering the programme. The visitors were unclear whether the education provider, given their overall responsibility for the programme, have the information required for them to make the final decision about individual applicant's suitability for the programme. The visitors therefore require that the education provider provides further evidence that outlines how the admission process provides them with the information they need to make an informed choice about whether or not to make an offer of a place on the programme.

2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of their input in the selection process, demonstrating how they ensure the selection criteria include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

Reason: The visitors reviewed documentation for this standard, including the programme specification, admission policy and the HEI employer contract. From their review the visitors considered that the entry criteria on to the programme included appropriate academic and professional entry standards. The visitors noted however that the programme specification stated that the selection process will be performed by the employing agencies who will undertake interviews and assess compliance with the criteria highlighted in the document. The senior team in their meeting also elaborated on the employers' contribution to the programme in terms of the selection process and the programme design. From the documentation review and discussions at the visit, the visitors considered that the selection process did not adequately demonstrate the education provider's input in deciding who comes on to the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence that clearly outlines the education provider's contribution to the selection process. This evidence must demonstrate how the education provider has the overall responsibility for selecting applicants with appropriate academic and professional standards.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence that employers intend to support the programme, to ensure it remains sustainable and fit for purpose for the foreseeable future.

Reason: From the documentation review and from discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider was engaging with three local authorities who were interested in providing learners to undertake the programme. The visitors also noted from their review of the documents that there were no contracts in place to demonstrate the partner organisation's commitment to the programme's sustainability. When asked at the visit, the programme team confirmed the contracts are pending HCPC approval of the programme. Given the funding for learners and the provision of placement opportunities on this programme will come directly from local authorities, the visitors require further evidence to ensure this standard is met. In particular, the visitors require further documentary evidence which demonstrates that partner organisations are committed to providing learners and resources to the programme, and that the programme will be financially sustainable as a result.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and

experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an effective process in place for appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the staff curriculum vitae and the apprenticeship handbook. From the documentation review and through discussions with both the senior and programme teams, the visitors were aware of the individual who will have overall professional responsibility for the programme. The visitors noted that the staff member identified was appropriately qualified and experienced and, on the relevant part of the Register. However, the visitors could not identify, either from the documents or through discussions at the visit, the process the education provider has in place for identifying and appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person to hold the overall professional responsibility for the programme. Therefore they could not determine how the education provider will continue to appoint a suitable person if and when a replacement becomes necessary. As such, the visitors require the education provider to demonstrate that they have an effective process for ensuring that the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that they have an effective process in place for ensuring availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: From their documentation review and all through discussions at the visit, the visitors were made aware that employers will identify practice-based learning opportunities for the learners in their employment. As part of the evidence submitted, the visitors were referred to the Quality Assurance Practice Learning document as well as the HEI employer contract. The visitors could see from their review of these documents that all placements are identified by the different employers. The visitors noted that the Quality Assurance Practice Learning document is a feedback form for practice educator and / or supervisor, and did not indicate how the education provider ensures appropriateness of practice-based learning prior to its commencement. The visitors considered that there is not a clear process in place to show how the education provider ensures availability and capacity of practice-based learning across the different practice-based learning providers. As such the visitors require further evidence demonstrating the process the education provider has to quality assure practice-based learning.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: In their mapping document, the education provider stated that interprofessional learning (IPL) will take place as social work staff are co-located with nurses, midwives, and other allied professions. They also stated that lecturers from social work deliver teaching sessions in health, and lecturers in health are involved in the delivery of the social work curriculum and will be included within the teaching on the apprenticeship programme. The education provider also referred the visitors to the apprenticeship handbook and some of the module descriptors to demonstrate how they meet this standard. During the facilities tour, the visitors were informed of other programmes – paramedics, nursing and midwifery – delivered by the education provider, where learners can benefit from IPL. However, from the documentation review and through discussions at the visit, the visitors could not see how IPL is formally part of the programme. Linked to this standard, they could not see how the education provider will ensure that learners on the programme have the opportunity to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions. The visitors heard from the programme team that they are working closely with nursing, operating department practitioners and paramedics programmes. The team also spoke about their plans to set up conferences and bring in interdisciplinary workshops. Whilst the visitors could see from these discussions that the education provider has opportunities to ensure IPL takes place, the visitors considered they will need to see evidence demonstrating that IPL is formally structured into the curriculum to consider this standard as met.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a regular process for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners, especially in role plays.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider referred the visitors to their service user and carer (SU&C) involvement documents which included:

- SU&C Person Specification
- SUCG Job Description and
- 2018-2019 SUCG involvement in social work programmes.

They also directed the visitors to their practice learning module descriptor. From reviewing these documents, the visitors could not see the education provider's process for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. At the visit, the visitors were presented with a consent form, which they considered did not provide enough detail to both service users and learners in order for them to make an informed choice about taking part in some role play activities given some of the role plays were recorded and made available on various forms of media. When asked in the learners' meeting, both the current learners and recent graduates from the BA Social Work programme said they had to complete a consent form at the start of their programmes in order to participate in role plays. The service users and carers also reiterated this in their meeting. However, neither of the groups remembered giving their consent at any other time all through the programme. The education provider also informed the visitors that some role plays are recorded on video tapes and given to learners for reflective learning. From this information the visitors were unclear what happens to the video tapes after the learners were through with them or whether the service users gave their consent for the tapes to be given to learners in the first place. The visitors therefore require that the education provider further evidence how they will ensure appropriate consent is obtained from both service users and learners regularly throughout the

programme. This evidence must also demonstrate that learners and service users are appropriately informed about the details of the specific activities they will be involved in.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency for social workers.

Reason: From reviewing the evidence for this standard, including the HEI employer contract, practice learning handbook, practice learning module descriptors and through discussions at the visit, the visitors were made aware that the employers are responsible for identifying and deciding practice-based learning for all learners. The visitors were not clear from the discussions at the visit or from the evidence submitted how the education provider will ensure that appropriate range of practice-based learning will be provided to the learners. Given learners will be undertaking practice-based learning at their places of employment, the visitors need to know what process the education provider has in place to ensure all learners are given the opportunity to access the different range of practice-based learning required for them to achieve the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency for social workers.

6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be appropriately qualified and experienced, and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy. It was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register, unless other arrangements are agreed with the HCPC. At the visit, the visitors were given the appointment criteria for external examiners, however this did not explicitly state that the person must be on the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are appropriate. The visitors therefore require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that this standard is met.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider recruiting a more diverse range of service users and carers onto the programme.

Reason: At the visit, the visitors met with a group of service users and carers who have been involved in the programme. The visitors could see from discussions with this group, their involvement in the planning and development of the programme, recruitment of staff, admissions and teaching and learning. The group also informed the visitors about how their feedback contributes to the quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation of the programme as well as plans to involve them in research activities in the future. From these discussions, the visitors were satisfied that the standard was met at threshold. However, the visitors noted that the service users and carers were from a limited range as they were mainly carers and a few service users with very limited range of services in terms of their experience. The visitors also noted that the members did not represent a very diverse group in terms of age, gender or ethnicity. The visitors therefore suggested that the education provider broaden their range of service users and carers to ensure overall quality and effectiveness of their involvement in the programme in the future.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider considers reviewing accessibility of resources available to learners given the limited time spent within the university environment.

Reason: During the facilities tour, the visitors asked the education provider about learners' accessibility to resources such as study skills support and support for virtual learning during out-of-office hours. The visitors were told that the study skills support sessions were only bookable during office hours and that learners can access support for virtual learning when university staff are available. From this response, the visitors understood that the access learners have to these resources currently during office hours meets the standard at threshold level. However, given learners on this programme would only be coming into the university once a week, the visitors suggest that further provision be made for this group of learners to be able to access these resources during out-of-office hours.

3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure arrangements to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners on the programme are effective and accessible.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that this standard was met at threshold based on the information provided in the programme documentation. During the tour, the visitors were informed that the wellbeing support sessions were only bookable during office hours. The visitors considered that given the nature of the programme, the majority of the learners may fall into the class of distance or mature learners or learners with caring responsibilities. For this reason the visitors suggest that the education provider reviews the arrangements they have in place to ensure those arrangements are effective at supporting the wellbeing and learning needs of all learners. These could include appropriate timing of classes and meetings to make best use of the limited time the

learners spend within the university environment as well as having wellbeing support sessions during out-of-office hours.

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science, Full time
Approval visit date	10-11 September 2019
Case reference	CAS-14605-D4N2R7

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Executive Summary

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HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Susanne Roff	Lay
David Whitmore	Paramedic
Gordon Pollard	Paramedic
Rabie Sultan	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit

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

Myra Evans	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of the West of England
Catherine Dyer	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of the West of England

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Paramedic
First intake	01 September 2014
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 100
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02101

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment. The education provider had proposed to increase learner numbers by 40 per cohort from February 2019, thus leading to an increase in resources, staffing, practice-based learning placements and practice educators.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we ask for certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes
Internal quality monitoring documentation	Yes

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

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice educators	Yes

Programme team	Yes
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Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 04 November 2019.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the learning outcomes will ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for paramedics.

Reason: For this standard, the visitors were directed to the programme specification and standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping document. The visitors reviewed the evidence and noted this mapping exercise had used the 2012 version of the HCPC SOPs, and not the most up-to-date version. Additionally, the visitors also noted there was reference made to the HCPC standards of education and training (SETs) 2011 version, not the revised June 2017 edition. They were therefore unable to determine whether these learning outcomes would ensure that learners meet the SOPs and SETs. Furthermore, the visitors noted across various documentations that there were inaccurate references to the QAA Benchmarks Statements and College of Paramedics Curriculum Framework, which the programme team agreed to rectify it. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to update the relevant documentation by referencing the correct versions as stated above, to demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that learners meet the current HCPC SOPs, for the relevant part of the Register.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure there is an effective process in place for obtaining consent from learners.

Reason: The visitors were directed to view the 'practical session consent form' and 'professional suitability and conduct policy and procedure' documents, as evidence for

this standard. From reviewing the evidence, the visitors noted the consent form is a generic form used across different programmes taught across the university. The education provider also stated in the mapping document that learners will be involved in a range of active learning tasks including the use of role play. It was also stated in the mapping document that participation in practical sessions is an essential component of the programme and any learner who does not wish to complete the consent to participate form must make an appointment to meet with the programme leader as a matter of urgency. If any learner still does not wish to complete the consent form following this meeting, then the matter would be explored under the education provider's professional suitability and conduct policy.

From reviewing the evidence and consent form provided, the process gave an impression that learners might not have an option to opt out, should they decline to participate in practical sessions such as role plays. Therefore, the visitors could not determine if there is a method of getting consent from learners with the option of opting out, should they wish to. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate there are effective processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from learners in order to for the visitors to make a judgement as to whether this standard is met.

