

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Aberdeen
Name of programme(s)	Independent Non-Medical Prescriber, Part time
Approval visit date	31 March 2020
Case reference	CAS-15121-N2S6D3

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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 for prescribing (for education providers) (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards

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

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

How we make our decisions

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

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

HCPC panel

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

Jennifer Caldwell	Occupational therapist
Alaster Rutherford	Independent prescriber
Patrick Armsby	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the virtual approval visit

There were other groups involved with the approval process as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Christine Kay	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Aberdeen
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Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Independent Non-Medical Prescriber
Mode of study	PT (Part time)

Entitlement	Independent prescribing Supplementary prescribing
First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02170

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

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

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

Type of evidence	Submitted	Comments
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	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education provider decided to move this event to a virtual (or remote) approval visit. In the table below, we have noted the meeting held, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards for prescribing

		were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards for prescribing were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Facilities and resources	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards for prescribing were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Senior staff	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards for prescribing were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Practice educators	No	The visitors were able to determine that many of the standards for prescribing were met prior to the visit. They determined it was not necessary to meet this group in order to understand how the other standards would be met.
Programme team	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

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.

B.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 education provider should ensure all documentation includes relevant HCPC context.

Reason: In the documentary submission the visitors noted that much of the programme documentation was not tailored for HCPC learners. In discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware of how the HCPC context is applied to the programme and made aware of the policies to ensure the programme is relevant for all learners. The programme team also indicated that the documentation would be updated post approval of the programme. From the discussions at the visit the visitors were

satisfied that the education provider will ensure the HCPC context is applied appropriately to the programme. However, the visitors recommend that the education provider formalises the relevant HCPC language in the programme documentation to ensure final clarity for learners.

C.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour in prescribing practice, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Recommendation: The education provider should formalise their inclusion of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Reason: In the module descriptors prior to the visit the visitors were able to see that the programme would ensure that learners are made aware and understand the ethics and professional expectations involved with prescribing. However, the module descriptors did not explicitly state this would cover the HCPC standards of conduct performance and ethics (SCPEs) within the context of the module. In the meeting with the programme team the education provider confirmed the modules (Applied Pharmacology, Therapeutics and Clinical Skills for Prescribing and Prescribing in practice) would cover the HCPC context and described how the SCPEs would be covered in these modules. The visitors recommend formalising this approach in the modules by stating explicitly how HCPC learners will be taught about applying the SCPEs to prescribing practice.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the virtual approval visit, the visitors recommend that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met, and that the programme is approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 21 May 2020 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).