Performance review process report

Middlesex University, 2018-21

Executive summary

This report covers our performance review of the programmes offered by Middlesex University. During this review one referral was made with regarding to the education provider increasing their number of service users and carers involved with their programme. This has been highlighted for review in their next performance review. As this referral constitutes a low risk to how the approved programmes continue to be delivered, our recommendation for the performance review period is five years.

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

Included within this report

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:

Peter Abel	Lead visitor, Biomedical Scientist
Pauline Douglas	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Hayley Hall	Service User Expert Advisor
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer
Sophie Bray	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers one HCPC-approved programme across one profession. It is a higher education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2009.

The provider has one approved programme currently running, this being their BSc (Hons) Applied biomedical science programme. Therefore, much of what we can gain about how the institution functions will also be programme specific as the information we have been provided with is framed in this sense.

The provider is located in London and has ongoing partnerships with two other providers (New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, and also the Metanoia Institute). Both of these partner institutions are also going through the performance review process this year.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

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

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2009

Institution performance data

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

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	8	6	2022	The value is lower than the benchmark for this data point. The ratio of staff to learners is 23.5:1. We had no concerns with sustainability or recruitment after viewing the providers portfolio as the provider addressed this in their reflections.

Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	1%	2019/20	The value being 2% lower than the benchmark is a very positive indicator for the provider. The provider has indicated this value may not be representative of the learners on the HCPC approved programme, but they can provide completion data for the placement year which is a better indicator of learner continuation and achievement for the BSc in Applied Biomedical Science
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	90%	2016/17	The provider's score is 3% lower than the benchmark for this area. The provider highlights that this represents data from learners on all biomedical science programmes, and in fact doesn't reflect scores from the specific HCPC approved programme who are likely to have better employment prospects as they graduate professionally qualified.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2017	We have used this data point as the industry standard measure of teaching quality. We recognise the TEF is being replaced, but this was the quality marker for the period under review. It is worth recognising that this was awarded several years ago now, but it is the most recent score awarded. TEF themselves state the following regarding the silver award "Based on the evidence available, the TEF Panel judged that the higher education provider delivers high quality teaching, learning and outcomes for its learners. It consistently exceeds rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education."
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	73%	60%	2021	This data point shows quite a significant drop in learner satisfaction. This value is far below the benchmark, however the provider has reflected on this in their portfolio and we were satisfied on the actions being taken to address this.

HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A		2018-21	We have recommended a review period of five years after reviewing the providers portfolio and being satisfied with their performance and ability to meet threshold of the standards. This will be confirmed once the report has gone to the Education and Training Panel who will make the final decision

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 <u>thematic areas reviewed</u> 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.

We sought out clarification on each quality theme via email communication to allow the provider to elaborate on previous information they had sent or send further evidence documents to answer the queries.

<u>Quality theme 1 – Securing future placement opportunities</u>

Area for further exploration: Within the portfolio the provider demonstrated there is a good supply of placement opportunities and they have reacted well to organisation change. The provider changed the format of placements following discussions with placement providers to ensure all learners received the same quality of laboratory experience. We queried whether service level agreements are in place with NHS partners. Related to this point, we wanted to explore future placement capacity across all areas, in response to the provider outlining that current discussions with other placement providers have not yet materialised.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider confirmed their placement providers have been offering placements since 2007 and the number of placement opportunities has been increasing in the past years. Although there are no current service agreements in place, the provider has identified several organisations they have had discussions

with secure placements from September 2023 and plan to approach them again towards the end of 2022. The provider doesn't have a shortage of placement currently and does not envisage this being a problem. We were satisfied that the information provided suggests there is no concern regarding number of placement providers, as the provider has the processes in place to ensure suitable placement supply, in line with SET 3.6: There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Quality theme 2 – Academic and placement audits

Area for further exploration: We noted there is a good liaison process in place which is demonstrated by regular discussions with partners, learners and trainers and monitoring processes in place. An 'Annual Monitoring and Enhancement' document was mentioned but not provided. We requested to see examples of completed audits (that were mentioned but not provided through the initial submission) to gain a better understanding of the appropriateness of their content.

Outcomes of exploration: We were provided with a copy of the audit of Northwick Park Hospital Laboratories. On being able to view the structure and content of the audit carried out, we were assured that the content is appropriate for assessing the placements, and shows that the provider is performing to an appropriate level when auditing their placements.

Quality theme 3 – Interprofessional education within the curriculum

Area for further exploration: The provider gave a limited outline of interprofessional education involved on learner placements. We considered there was a lack of evidence of interprofessional education embedded into the curriculum and it was mostly undertaken on placement sites. Where we recognise the provider has met relevant standards linked to interprofessional education, we requested detail about other formal educational materials or assessments that will enable learners to demonstrate their understanding of working with and learning from other professionals, to see how this functioned in practice.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider identified further areas that their curriculum includes interprofessional education and reflected on how learners are able to demonstrate and evidence their experiences of interprofessional education in their personal portfolios. This showed the education provider had considered the application of interprofessional education across the programme, not limited to placement sites. We were satisfied that interprofessional education is well embedded in the curriculum and that learners would be made aware of the role of other professionals.

Quality theme 4 – Equality and diversity policies, training and monitoring

Area for further exploration: The provider reflected upon difficulties faced by some learners regarding access to financial support. We noted there was limited reflection on how this is being addressed through policies, training or implementation and monitoring. We requested further reflections to ensure the provider has the

necessary policies and functions in place to support learners having access to the same opportunities, despite their financial background.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider submitted their policy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Curriculum and explained how at a validation and review event, the programme team are required to explain how they have ensured that their curriculum is inclusive. They have plans to evaluate the inclusion of their online learning platforms within the policy. The education provider is addressing the challenges by monitoring implementation of the inclusive curriculum through learner feedback and teaching observations.

The education provider provides training at departmental and faculty levels, have a departmental staff development day in which they cover the requirements of the inclusive curriculum, and hold learning and teaching showcase events. We were satisfied there is a comprehensive equality and diversity policy to which the programme adheres, and the provider is responding to current challenges by including feedback from appropriate sources.

Quality theme 5 – Horizon scanning for future staff absences

Area for further exploration: We noted from the portfolio that programme staff have left and not all been replaced. We asked for information regarding succession plans to replace leaving staff as in the provider's portfolio. We wanted to ensure stability for learners on the programme with an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider has recently appointed a medical microbiologist and plan to appoint two more members of staff to replace those retired or retiring this year. With this information, we were satisfied that the provider is suitably planning for the future and ensuring sustainability of staff.

Quality theme 6 – Staff support with the use of technology

Area for further exploration: The provider highlighted that staff struggled with the move to more virtual teaching. The visitors noted this could be a cause of the poor NSS results regarding staff being uncomfortable with online training. In response to this the provider introduced 'Threshold Standards' to standardise the way learning and assessment material is presented on their online platforms. We explored how support was provided for staff as a result of this and the impact on teaching and placements.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider has held several staff development days, online events and support for sessions which were outlined in their quality theme response. The provider organised eight different key events / sessions throughout the year to support staff who had concerns or lacked the confidence to live stream their synchronous sessions. They also provided further guidance to staff. The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) threshold was a university wide initiative requiring all the providers' departments to start to implement it from September 2020. The education provider annually monitors the implementation of the TEL threshold and there is ongoing development of their online learning platform to

comply with this threshold. The TEL folder provided various forms of information to show how technology had impacted staff and served to improve the delivery of lecture and practical material.

We were assured that the provider reflected on the challenges their staff faced and have begun to address them appropriately. They are monitoring the implementation and impact of the threshold standards through the Senior Departmental Programme Administrator, and next year plan to improve this through teaching observations. We were satisfied that this this response ensured staff were getting appropriate training and the threshold standards are being reflected upon appropriately.

Quality theme 7 – Use of IBMS accredited laboratories

Area for further exploration: The provider only uses the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) laboratory placements. This can be used as an indicator of quality for laboratory placements. We explored if the use of only IBMS accredited training laboratories is a requirement rather than a coincidence and whether this will be maintained in the future.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider outlined that learners must carry out a 12-month placement in one of their partner diagnostic laboratories that has been approved by both the education provider and the IBMS. They provided the Handbook as evidence of this. Successful completion of the HCPC-approved programme is dependent upon successful completion of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio.

The education providers maintain a separate approval process of an IBMS approved training laboratory, so it is possible for them not to approve one for the training of their learners. It was made clear that the use of IBMS accredited labs is of paramount importance and clearly stated in the Course Handbook. We were satisfied that this requirement is included in policy.

Quality theme 8 – Reaccreditation with IBMS

Area for further exploration: Their HCPC approved programme is also accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS). We explored their upcoming IBMS reaccreditation and asked for the provider to reflect about any foreseeable difficulties, for example regarding staffing.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider is planning to review their undergraduate biomedical science programmes, including the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science, in the 2022-23 academic year. They are confident in their ability to achieve reaccreditation by the IBMS, through internal and external review processes. We were satisfied that the provider has appropriately reflected upon the programme and is aware of potential challenges they may face in gaining IBMS reaccreditation.

Quality theme 9 – Specific areas of the curriculum under development

Area for further exploration: There are three themes underpinning curriculum development identified by the provider, which are authentic assessments,

assessment tariff, and hybrid learning. There was limited reflection from the provider regarding the impact of these changes on teaching, and how staff would be supported to implement them. We explored how far changes have been developed, and if there is evidence and resources for staff training to support future changes.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider outlined how each of the three areas are being developed and integrated into the programme in more detail. They have produced guidance and sessions to support staff with the new requirements. There were several support sessions run to support staff with hybrid learning, as outlined in [Quality theme 6](). The areas under development that were identified have several initiatives in process to improve the learner experience. This was demonstrated in the documentation provided and in the staff training that has already been delivered. We are satisfied that the provider has reflected on the impact of changes to the curriculum, including improving learner experience, and have put sufficient support in place for staff.

Quality theme 10 – Service users and carer involvement

Area for further exploration: There was limited reflection on the involvement of service users and carers (SU&C) in the provider's portfolio. In particular, there was limited mention of SU&C involvement in the development of programmes, and limited reference to the fitness to study panel. We explored if service users are involved through governance of the programme and if there was a service user representative on the fitness to study panel.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider gave information about the services user involvement in the governance of the programme, including involvement in interviews and their Liaison Group. They outlined a service user sits on the fitness to practice panel, and will be consulted in the programme review. In response to the visitor's feedback the provider has updated their policy to replace the term 'independent member' with 'service user'. We were satisfied service user involvement remains integral at all levels of the programme management.

We noted that a single individual is identified as a service user. The visitors recommended the provider expands the use of service users in future teaching and assessment activities.

Quality theme 11 – Methods for gaining learner feedback

Area for further exploration: We noted that there was good feedback from placement received from learners, however no examples of this were provided. We explored some examples of completed feedback forms, for reassurance about the content of the feedback collected.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider sent examples of feedback forms from learners. We were satisfied with learner feedback and providers methods for gaining feedback to reflect on, after seeing this documentation. The visitors suggested the potential for good practice if the provider recorded the feedback more formally in future, as this would be useful information to reflect upon to help improve their programmes.

<u>Quality theme 12 – Records of visits with practice placement educators</u>

Area for further exploration: We noted there was good evidence of liaison with placement practice educators in the portfolio, however there was a lack of formal record of this provided in the portfolio. Record keeping enables the provider to more accurately reflect on themes, and plan to address them. We explored how the provider formally records visits to learners on placements to ensure there is a structured process in place.

Outcomes of exploration: The provider outlined the dates on which three-way (Placement Tutor / Placement Lab Training Officer / Learner) online meetings occurred to show records of visits. This information was gathered from the Placement Tutor's Outlook Calendar. We were satisfied that this response showed planned records to visit learners on placement, but the visitors suggested recording the feedback more formally. Record keeping within an organisation is important, and useful for monitoring progress overtime. The outcomes and resulting actions from feedback gained (including feedback explored in quality theme 12) would be a good reference point when the provider comes to their next performance review.

Section 4: Summary of findings

This section provides information summarising we' 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

<u>Quality theme: Institution self-reflection</u>

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Resourcing, including financial stability** –
    - o The provider annually reviews the sustainability of their academic provision, considering the number of learners recruited to the programme. Their recruitment to biomedical sciences (BMS) remained strong, but they noted a fall in learner numbers in 2021. The education provider identified this was because of changes in A-level and BTEC arrangements and increased learner intake from competitor universities but expect this to return to prior numbers over the next two years.
    - o The education provider evidence good resourcing in terms of staff and specialist support. Their financial model for BMS is within the top quartile for the providers internal financial stability. To ensure they can maintain this strong financial position, they have sought to develop a parallel award in Medical Sciences to increase the reach of their provision.
    - o The education provider has a strategy in place to increase placement providers, and this as a key priority. We considered recruitment was stable and the providers evaluations on learner numbers were justified.

- o The education provider has reflected suitably on changes in learner recruitment and addressed expectations for the future. Whilst they have demonstrated strong financial stability, the education provider is considering actions to sustain this. We were satisfied that the provider is performing well.

- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
  - o The partnerships between the provider and Practice Placement Educators is managed by the Liaison Group, made up of several different programme staff and practice placement educators.
  - o The provider's partnership with Health Service Laboratories (HSL) in 2015 has resulted in increased capacity and variety of placements for learners, which the education provider outlined in detail in their portfolio. This created challenges in terms of workload with the increased management, however, has been reflected on by the provider as 'well worth' the increased workload to give learners an 'enriched learning experience'.
  - o We considered there was a good supply of placement opportunities through the providers partnerships with other organisations. This area was explored through quality theme 1. We considered that the provider reflected upon their partnerships and how that has impacted upon staff capacity and performance. They have reflected upon the value of partnerships and outlined the improvements they have made, demonstrating good performance in relation to their partnerships.

- **Academic and placement quality –**
  - o The provider undergoes Annual Monitoring Enhancement every academic year, using data and qualitative evidence to develop the programmes. They have handbooks in place for both Learning and Quality Enhancement and Placements which outline how quality is ensured in both settings.
  - o In 2018, following feedback from placement providers, the provider changed learner placements to occur in the final year of a four-year programme. This was to ensure learners were better prepared for HCPC registration and the job market at graduation point.
  - o The provider monitors academic quality through module evaluation, NSS, progression and achievement data, External Examiner's report and progression and achievement data. They provided the Annual Monitoring and Enhancement report as evidence which outlines the information gathered and actions from this.
  - o The education provider acknowledges challenges in implementing actions due to workload constraints and employed a Director of the Student Experience to facilitate this.
  - o They provided examples of completed audits of placement providers, regularly gain feedback from partners, learners and staff and plan provision for the future. There is a good liaison process in place and we were satisfied that the provider is performing adequately.

- **Interprofessional education –**

- o Interprofessional learning is recorded through learners submitting evidence from placements in a Registration Training Portfolio. Learners experience interprofessional education during module 5, where they are required to consider the roles of different professions.
- o Those working in hospital placements encounter several other professionals across a range of professions (physicians, GP practice nurses, cross-infection nurses, phlebotomists, porters, couriers, as well as Medical Laboratory Assistants, Associate Practitioners and Biomedical Scientists).
- o Whilst the provider has already met standards relevant to this theme, there portfolio lacked in depth reflections on interprofessional learning across the programme. We considered that interprofessional education was mainly performed on placements and there was little evidence of it being embedded into the curriculum, which was explored in [quality theme 3](#). The provider outlined other areas in the curriculum covering interprofessional education.
- o As an outcome of the exploration, we were satisfied that the education provider was able to reflect on multiple areas of interprofessional education and demonstrate it is well embedded within their programmes.

- **Service users and carers –**
  - o The provider includes a service user as a key member of their Liaison Group. This group consider learners performance on placement and provide support. They can make recommendations to improve student experience.
  - o In the response to quality theme, the provider acknowledged that they did not make the service user and carer's (SU&C) involvement in the portfolio clear. We were concerned that SU&Cs were not embedded in the curriculum and there was a lack of evidence of involvement. This was dealt with through [quality theme 10,](#) to receive more detailed reflections on the use of service users and carers during the review period.
  - o In response the education provider outlined in detail their service user's involvement and fitness to practice panel. The provider amended their policy wording to specifically name 'service users' in view of our feedback, to make this clearer.
  - o We were satisfied that the provider is performing adequately following the additional information provided. We noted there was a single individual identified as a service user that sits on disciplinary panels. We recommend that the provider considers expanding the number of service users in future teaching and assessment activities.

- **Equality and diversity –**
  - o The provider uses an institution wide equality and diversity policy, ensuring that recruitment of learners is based solely on academic profile. Potential attainment gaps are monitored annually, and records are kept ensuring reasonable adjustments are made where necessary.
  - o The provider has identified that due to financial position the accessibility of placements varies between learners. There is no

financial support for learners on placements which could disadvantage some learners.
- o We considered there was little evidence provided on policies, training or implementation and monitoring. The provider evidenced their relevant policies (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Curriculum) and processes in place to ensure the curriculum is inclusive.
- o This was explored in quality theme 4, and we were satisfied that the training and processes in place, and feedback mechanisms, are sufficient to ensure that the provider is performing adequately.

- **Horizon scanning –**
  - o The provider annually reviews the sustainability of programmes but has noted that there is no risk to their HCPC approved programme being closed due to consistently sustainable learner numbers.
  - o The provider is seeking new placement opportunities and hopes to encourage placement providers to pay expenses to learners. The education provider has not had a problem with placement capacity, highlighting it has often been that they have more placements than needed for learners.
  - o The education provider is having discussions with several potential placement providers to ensure future placement capacity. These were discussed in quality theme 1. They will also consider developing an apprenticeship in the future if there is suitable demand and detail the steps that will be taken.
  - o We were satisfied that the provider is suitably reflecting upon the future and planning for horizon scanning.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We noted that a single individual is identified as a service user. The visitors recommended the provider expands the use of service users in future teaching and assessment activities. This area has met the threshold standards for the programme, however, limits the provider's use of service users and carers and should be considered.

Outstanding issues for follow up: To mitigate for this risk, we should ask for specific reflections from the provider through the next monitoring cycle to understand any impacts on service user involvement and if they have impacted upon the approved programmes.

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:
- The provider supplied further information about apprenticeships as well as a completed audit which signified that there are effective communication channels between the education provider and employers, and that placements are being effectively monitored
- Interprofessional education is well embedded in the curriculum and it is clear that learners would be made aware of the role of other health care professionals. This was demonstrated in the module descriptor provided as evidence
- There is a comprehensive equality and diversity policy to which the programme adheres. This was shown in the policy documentation provided during the submission

- Documentation provided related to apprenticeships demonstrated that horizon scanning was taking place and that the education provider has that ability to set up a new apprenticeship programme should demand arise

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Impact of COVID-19** –
  - At the start of the pandemic all learning was moved online and the format of learning and assessments was adapted for this change. Practical sessions were adapted to align to restrictions, and when not possible for learners to engage with certain activities alternative arrangements were made.
  - The education provider has highlighted the challenges and challenges for learners relating to placements, but also how they have managed this by moving aspects online and providing more support.
  - Despite considerable disruption to the delivery of the programme, several online learning aspects have been identified and embedded into the curriculum. The introduction of on-line and virtual activities for learning and placement provision appears suitable and effective and show how the provider has reflected upon programme delivery effectively and in a suitable timeframe.
  - We were satisfied that the provider is performing adequately, and no quality activities were required.

- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
  - The provider made significant improvements to their virtual learning environment to improve layout and content at the start of the pandemic. They introduced 'Threshold Standards' to standardise the way learning and assessment material is presented on their online learning platform. All classroom-based learning was moved online at the start of the first lockdown to enable accessibility and engagement for all learners.
  - The provider described the support in place for staff with regards to using technology for teaching. They outline how they monitor the implementation of the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) threshold by asking the Senior Departmental Programme Administrator to annually check the MyLearning module pages to identify those, which do not comply.
  - We were reassured in quality theme 6 that staff were getting suitable support to implement technology use into the programme and are satisfied that the provider has addressed the issues that arose regarding use of technology during the review period.

- **Apprenticeships –**
  - Although they do not provide apprenticeships in the professions we regulate, the provider has reflected on the impact of the one provider with a biomedical science apprenticeship programme in London.
  - They have considered the development of an apprenticeship programme in biomedical science in the future but currently cannot

justify this in terms of annual intake of learners and additional staff. The provider has demonstrated good practice by considering the introduction of an apprenticeship in the future in detail.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We undertook quality activities in relation to the support given to staff regarding the use of technology, and these were responded to by the provider with further information and clarifications. Following quality activities and the additional information provided we had no further concerns.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: The provider showed good responses to the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic to support learners and ensure standards were met. The visitors also highlighted good practice with reference to the providers reflections on the potential introduction of apprenticeships. The education provider has thoroughly considered the impact of and processes needed if apprenticeships were introduced.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
    - o The quality code informs the provider's academic quality and governance and this was evidenced through the policy documents within their Learning and Quality Enhancement handbook.
    - o We were satisfied that the provider has engaged with the Quality Code and used it to inform policy and practice. The provider has successfully undergone QAA reviews before the advent of the Office for Students (OfS).
    - o We are satisfied that the provider is performing to the required level with regards to alignment to the UK Quality Code.

- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies –**
    - o All the laboratories that offer placements to the provider's learners are accredited for training by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS).
    - o The education provider have outlined in the programme handbook that learners will 'carry out a 12-month placement in one of our partner diagnostic laboratories that has been approved by both [the education provider] and the IBMS' which reassured us in reference to our concern in quality theme 6 about the requirement for this level of regulation for laboratory placements.
    - o We are satisfied that the provider is performing to the required level with regards to ensuring their practice education providers are regulated.

- **National Learner Survey (NSS) outcomes –**
    - o The provider acknowledged their below NSS scores are below the benchmark, and highlighted the areas with poor results.

- They have linked outcomes to staff being uncomfortable with online training and have been working to improve this. The education provider has held multiple support sessions for staff and created guidance. The provider has addressed lower feedback scores in relation to staff absence by increasing the number of staff on modules. This was explored through quality theme 6.
- We are satisfied that the provider has acknowledged challenges they have faced and are addressing them appropriately.

- **Office for Students monitoring –**
  - In 2018 the provider gained full registration with the Office for Students (OfS), with no conditions. Since then, they have remained compliant with the OfS's registration requirements.
  - Additionally, there has been no specific OfS feedback about the Applied Biomedical Science programme, meaning there were no recommendations or conditions that needed to be met with regards to the HCPC approved programme. We were satisfied that the provider is performing adequately here.

- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
  - The curriculum for the BSc in Applied Biomedical Science was developed taking into account the QAA benchmark statements for Biomedical Sciences and the IBMS criteria, and requirements for IBMS reaccreditation. We had some enquiries about their preparation for reaccreditation.
  - The provider are confident in their ability to achieve reaccreditation by the IBMS, and have outlined how they are already addressing potential challenges. We were satisfied with the provider's response in quality theme 8 and agreed they are preparing for reaccreditation appropriately.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We raised quality activities in relation to staffing concerns and a NSS score below the benchmark, and these were responded to by the provider with further information and clarifications. Following quality activities and the additional information provided we had no further concerns.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: It was made clear that the use of IBMS accredited labs is of paramount importance and clearly stated in the Course Handbook. Information was provided to show that staff recruitment is taking place and several new posts have been identified.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Curriculum development –**
  - As mentioned above, the curriculum has been developed in line to meet IBMS standards. When the Applied Biomedical Science programme gets reviewed in the next two years, the provider will

consult learners on the curriculum and programme developments. The provider identified three themes underpinning curriculum development, which are authentic assessments, assessment tariff, and hybrid learning. The education provider is developing assessments to be better suited to real-world problems, requiring staff development and guidance to support this change.

- o The provider has begun developing a standard assessment tariff, ensuring that learners and staff are not overwhelmed with completing and marking assessments respectively. This should be complete this year. They are also considering how to incorporate hybrid learning into the programmes to benefit the learners.
- o The education provider provided further evidence and information regarding the areas of development under review. This was explored in quality theme 9.
- o We were satisfied that the areas are based on improving learner experience and there is sufficient supporting documentation in place to show the provider is performing well.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
  - o As previously mentioned, the provider works in line with HCPC and IBMS standards.
  - o We were satisfied that the programme is engaged with relevant professional body guidance and curriculum development, and has made changes in line with them.

- **Capacity of practice-based learning –**
  - o The number of learners who can transfer onto the HCPC approved programme following a successful interview, is determined by the number of available placements. This ensures that suitable capacity of practice based learning is always achieved.
  - o In recent years the numbers of placement opportunities offered to the provider has exceeded the numbers of suitable applicants, so currently there is no issue with there being insufficient placement opportunities available. We were satisfied that placement capacity exceeds demand.
  - o From the documentation provided there were positive comments from learners on experiences and support provided on practice-based learning experiences.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We raised quality activities in relation to the areas in development in the curriculum, and these were responded to by the provider with further information and clarifications. Following this quality and the additional information provided we had no further concerns.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: The areas under development that we identified have several initiatives in process to improve the learner experience. This was demonstrated in the documentation provided and in the staff training that has already been delivered.

<u>Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions</u>

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **Learners** –
  - The provider has a Programme Voice Group, on which sits a Student Voice Leader. The group consider, discuss and response to feedback from learners.
  - Learners are consulted on curriculum and programme developments during programme reviews, and there are feedback mechanisms in place after placements and modules to gain insight.
  - The provider has received no learner complaints regarding their HCPC approved programme, and have resolved minor concerns quickly.
  - Placement satisfaction feedback forms were distributed to learners and completed examples of these were provided to us. We noted good feedback on placements received from learners. We carried out a minor quality theme requesting further documentation which can be seen in quality theme 11. Feedback forms from learners and evidence of placement visit meetings were provided. We recommended these were recorded more formally in the future.
  - We were satisfied that the provider has suitable learner feedback mechanisms in place and can demonstrate this through their documentation.

- **Practice placement educators** –
  - The provider has a comprehensive process in place to ensure good monitoring of practice placement educators. Practice placement educators are provided with a placement handbook, which outlines roles and responsibilities and the lines of communication.
  - The Placement Tutor, who is also the Programme Leader, meets with Practice Based Educators and learners before and during placement to ensure that their roles and responsibilities are fully understood. The provider states they have a good rapport with their practice placement educators who have been supportive of the programme and learners.
  - They have viewed the placements very much as training opportunities for future members of staff in their laboratories and indeed, have offered a number of learners employment in their departments shortly after completing their placements.
  - We noted there is good evidence of liaison with practice placement educators and the provider outlined the records of virtual visits (explored in quality theme 12). We were satisfied that the provider is performing adequately.

- **External examiners** –
  - The External Examiner plays an important role in monitoring and ensuring that the providers process for assessment and examination is fairly conducted in line with their internal regulation.
  - The external examiners reports identified the challenge of ensuring information is easily accessible on the virtual learning environment. There is a document which has guidance for the location of content for

the external examiners. Staff development was carried out to ensure all staff were complying with the guidance.

- o In response to feedback from the external examiner, the provider agreed to provide them with average module grades when reviewing the module assessments.
- o We agreed there were good responses to external examiners recommendations and are satisfied that the provider is performing adequately.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We raised quality activities in relation to learners and placement records and these were responded to by the provider with further information and clarifications. Following this quality and the additional information provided we had no further concerns.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: All areas met threshold for the standard. We considered there was good liaison with practice placement educators and good responses to external examiner recommendations.

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:
- The provider identified the figure for aggregation of percentage of learners not continuing is unlikely to represent the learner continuation data for the Applied Biomedical Science programme. Learners transfer to this programme from the Biomedical Science programme after three years and only academically able learners are eligible to transfer following successful interview.

- The provider noted the aggregation of percentage of those who complete programmes in employment / further study represents all learners on biomedical science programmes. It does not reflect the employment prospects of those learners, who completed the Applied Biomedical Science programme. Learners on the Applied Biomedical Science programme are professionally qualified on graduation therefore should have a better employment prospect than learners taking other biomedicals science programmes at the education provider.

- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award: The provider has addressed their main challenge of learner progression that was acknowledged by the TEF panel. The education providers' initiatives and reviews to improve this are ongoing.

- National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score: The lower than benchmark NSS score has been explored through quality theme and reflection in the portfolio. Important to note the NSS score is based solely or predominantly on feedback from learners, who are not taking the HCPC approved programme. The provider is striving to maintain the strong staff to learner ratios on their programmes.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We raised quality activities in relation to NSS scores and these were responded to by the provider with further information and clarifications. Following this quality and the additional information provided we had no further concerns.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: Data has been used carefully with many areas of positive engagement demonstrated.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

<u>Number of Service Users and Carers involved in programme</u>

Area(s) of practice applicable to: Biomedical Scientist

Programme(s) applicable to: BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science

Summary of issue: We noted that a single individual is identified as a service user. The visitors recommended the provider expands the use of service users in future teaching and assessment activities. This area has met the threshold standards for the programme, however, limits the provider's use of service users and carers and should be considered. To mitigate for this risk, we should ask for specific reflections from the provider through the next monitoring cycle to understand any impacts on service user involvement and if they have impacted upon the approved programmes.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, we recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2026-27 academic year

Reason for this recommendation:
We were satisfied that the provider has performed to a suitable level during the period under review, addressing challenges and adapting to changes throughout their portfolio. Where quality theme was required, the provider supplied sufficient further evidence to satisfy we concerns. We some minor recommendations but were overall in agreement that a five-year review period was suitable and appropriate.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2009