
Approval process report

University of Birmingham, Independent and supplementary prescribing,
2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve an independent and supplementary prescribing programme at the University of Birmingham. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

We have

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area
- Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found following exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme should be approved

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether the programme is approved
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year

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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / 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 approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)

- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

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 this review:

Rosie Furner	Lead visitor, independent prescribing
Nick Haddington	Lead visitor, independent prescribing
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers nine HCPC-approved programmes across two professions, including a post registration programme for supplementary prescribing and independent prescribing annotations. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1992.

The education provider has an approved independent and supplementary prescribing programme. This is the Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing programme and has been approved since September 2020. This programme sits in the School of Pharmacy.

The proposed programme will sit in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. There are differences between the two programmes, which is why we need to approve it separately.

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	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1997
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1992
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2020

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.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	659	739	September 2023	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was

				<p>assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>We explored whether there are sufficient resources for an effective programme. The visitors were satisfied with the evidence provided, which assured them the standard was met and adequately addressed their concerns.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year’s data point, the education provider’s performance has dropped by 1%.</p> <p>We did not explore this as the data point suggests the education provider is performing above sector norms.</p>
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment	94%	93%	2019-20	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p>

/ further study				<p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 2%.</p> <p>We understood learners for the proposed programme will be employed. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because despite the drop, graduates are still making progress with securing employment opportunities and progressing to further study.</p>
Learner satisfaction	77.6%	74.1%	2023	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>We are not able to compare the 2023 data with the data from 2022. This is because there has been a change in the data from 2023.</p> <p>We explored the data point from 2023 and information relating to how the programme meets the standards. We were satisfied the learning, teaching and</p>

				support available to learners was sufficient.
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The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Information for applicants –**
 - The education provider uses the Code of Practice on the Admission of Students to inform applicants of the requirements of the programme. This policy is set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements. The education provider is committed to widening participation and fair access, and encourages applicants from all social and cultural backgrounds.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The education provider uses the Code of Practice on the Admission of Students to assess the English language skills, character, and health of applicants. This policy is set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - Learners need to provide a satisfactory current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service statement, evidence of a satisfactory health declaration and immunisation record, and a self-declaration of health and character.
 - Non-academic requirements, such as fitness to practise, the Disclosure and Barring Service check, health, and immunisations, are stated in the prospectus and website entries where appropriate to specific programmes. These are added as conditions of offer where required.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - The education provider uses their Guidance Note for the Accreditation of Prior Learning to ensure they can consider the prior learning of learners. This policy is set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - Applicants should contact the Admissions Tutor to discuss the appropriateness of their experience outside of formal education. Admissions Tutor will make an initial assessment of the individuals' prior learning and recommended whether the applicant should produce a portfolio for assessment.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - The education provider uses their Code of Practice on the Admission of Students to ensure the equality, diversity, and inclusion of the admissions process. This policy is set at the institution level.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ –**
 - The education provider uses a number of policies in order to develop programmes and ensure they are delivered to the threshold level of entry to the Register:
 - Programme and Module Development and Approval process
 - Annual Taught Programme and Module Review Process
 - Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback
 - External Examiners System (including Code of Practice on External Examining)
 - These policies are set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements. Creating a new programme is a two-step process. A Plan to Develop a New Programme form is submitted, accompanied by market research and a business case. This requires approval by College Board. Once

¹ This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

approved, a New Programme Proposal is submitted, with the programme specification and further documents, including comments from an external adviser.

- External examiners provide the education provider with impartial and independent advice. They comment on the academic standards and learner's achievement in relation to these standards, through oversight of the assessment process at the module and programme level.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The education provider uses a number of policies in order to ensure the sustainability of their provision:
 - Policy on consultation with learners
 - Programme and Module Development and Approval process
 - Annual Taught Programme and Module Review Process
 - Vice Chancellor's Integrated Review Process
 - External Examiners System
 - These policies are set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - Learners are formally represented on decision-making committees of the education provider. Consultation with learners is an important part of the process when changes are planned that will affect learners' educational experience.
 - The programme proposer liaises with the College Marketing and Communications team, who will produce a full market research report. This is to determine unequivocally whether a viable market for the programme exists at the first stage of planning a new programme.
 - All education provider services, including academic departments and professional services, are reviewed as part of the Vice Chancellor's Integrated Review Process every five years. The review identifies areas of strength and opportunities for future development.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - The education provider uses a number of policies in order to ensure their provision is delivered effectively:
 - Annual Taught Programme and Module Review Process
 - Annual Postgraduate Annual Review Process
 - Vice Chancellor's Integrated Review Process
 - External Examiners System

- These policies are set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - The education provider reflects and evaluates the effectiveness of their teaching through the annual review process. This is with a view to enhance the provision for learners.
 - External examiners moderate the assessment process through reviewing assessed work and marks awarded by internal examiners.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - To ensure staff are managed and there is effective staff development, the education provider uses several policies:
 - Birmingham Academic Career Framework
 - University of Birmingham Fairness and Diversity policy
 - University of Birmingham EDI Scheme 2021-24
 - Promotion criteria include five separate contribution areas:
 - Research
 - Education
 - Enterprise
 - Engagement and Impact
 - Leadership and Management and Citizenship.
 - These policies are set at the institution level.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - The education provider uses their policy on Collaborative Provision to manage partnerships. This policy is set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - Provision of programmes with others should be consistent with the education provider's strategic plans, be congruent with academic provision, and bring clear benefits to all those involved.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - To ensure the academic quality of programmes, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - Code of Practice on External Examining
 - Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback
 - Guidance on the assessment tariff
 - Guidance on moderation
 - Code of Practice on Lecture Capture
 - Code of Practice on the assessment and award of higher doctorates
 - Code of Practice for the Assessment of Research Degree Theses
 - Code of Practice on Teaching and Academic Support provided by Registered Students
 - Processes for Peer Enrichment of Teaching
 - Programmes and modules have a published schedule of assessments. This includes the type of assessment, submission and return dates, the type of feedback provided and who will issue the feedback. Learners are made aware of this information at the beginning of each programme and module.
 - These policies are set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
 - To ensure the quality of practice education, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - Code of Practice on placement Learning
 - Guidance on Placement Learning
 - Schools should determine that a practice education provider is able to:
 - Provide learning opportunities which enable the intended learning outcomes to be achieved.
 - Support learners during practice education.
 - Fulfil responsibilities under health and safety legislation in the workplace, regarding the level of skill and experience of learners in practice education.

- These general policies are set at the institution level. Quality of practice education is managed at programme- and school-level through local processes.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement –**
 - To ensure learners are involved in programmes, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - Code of Practice on the Student Representation System
 - Code of Practice on learner attendance / engagement and reasonable diligence
 - The Student Representation System (SRS) is a partnership between the education provider and the Guild of Students. The SRS ensures every learner is effectively represented.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
 - The education provider uses their policy on Programme and Module Development and Approval process to ensure service user and carer involvement. These general policies are set at the institution level and will apply to all programmes. However, service user involvement is managed at programme- and school-level via bespoke local processes.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - In order to ensure learners are supported, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - Code of Practice on Personal Academic Tutoring
 - Code of Practice on Student Concerns and Complaints
 - Guidance Note on Student Grievances to Council

- Learners may submit a concern review form to request their concerns be reviewed by the Head of School or Professional Services.
 - These policies are set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - All staff resources are in place. An annual review process ensures that budgets for each college are appropriate for delivering all targets, including predicted intakes. The education provider's five-year forward look planning process provides a model for longer term strategic changes. There is access to facilities including lecture and small group teaching rooms, computer clusters, clinical skills teaching, a dedicated medical library, and private study space. We were informed sessions are scheduled in facilities according to content with access to appropriate learning resources including computers, clinical skills equipment, and patient simulators. Other resources include handbooks, course material, key texts, and a range of e-learning resources including Medicines Complete, Script e-learning, i-clinical & Acland.
 - The course will be led by the Programme Director who has overall responsibility for all aspects of the programme. They are supported by the Head of Postgraduate Taught and CPD, the Head of Education and the Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery. As well as the programme team, the education provider employs visiting lecturers.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - In order to ensure learners have ongoing suitability to study programmes, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committee
 - Code of Practice on learner attendance / engagement and reasonable diligence
 - Code of Practice on Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study
 - Concerns can be raised by anyone, whether internal or external, at any time while a learner is registered to study. Code of Practice on Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study is a supportive procedure to be used when a learner appears to be unable or unwilling to manage their health and wellbeing, and the education provider has good reason to intervene.
 - These policies are set at the institution level.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - In order to ensure learners learn with and from other learners and professionals, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - Programme and Module Development and Approval process
 - Annual Taught Programme and Module Review Process
 - These policies are set at the institution level, with additional activity taking place via the education provider's IPE steering group and at local level.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - In order to ensure the education provider complies with equality, diversity and inclusion about learners, the education provider uses a number of policies:
 - University of Birmingham Fairness and Diversity policy
 - Guidance on supporting Transgender Staff and Students
 - Code of Practice on Accommodating Student Religious Observance
 - The Fairness and Diversity Policy is an over-arching statement of provisions and arrangements with regards to equality and diversity. The education provider develops supplemental equality schemes, and codes of practice and guidelines, to support the policy.
 - These policies are set at the institution level.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - To ensure objectivity relating to assessments, the education provider uses the following policies:
 - Regulation 7: Assessment, Progression and Award
 - Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback
 - External Examiners System
 - Regulations 7 sets out how the education provider assesses learners.
 - These policies are set at the institution level.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - To ensure learners and education provider understand requirements relating to progression and achievement, the education provider uses the following policies:
 - Code of Practice on Extension to Study Periods
 - Code of Practice on Academic Integrity
 - Regulation 7: Assessment, Progression and Award
 - External Examiners System
 - Regulations 7 sets out the requirements for progression from one stage of a programme to the next, regulations on the granting and calculation of awards.
 - These policies are set at the institution level, with minor changes depending on professional requirements.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals –**
 - To ensure learners can appeal against assessment processes the education provider has the following processes:
 - Code of Practice on Academic Appeals Procedure
 - Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committee
 - These policies are set at the institution level.
 - The appeals process is evidence based. Independent supporting evidence should be provided with the appeal submission to substantiate any circumstances and the impact they had on the learner. Circumstances cited in an appeal or in the school response must be corroborated by evidence.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- The Programme Director has overall responsibility for all aspects of the programme. They will be supported by the Head of Postgraduate Taught and CPD, the Head of Education and the Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The Programme Management Committee meets three times per year. They provide feedback to the School of Nursing and Midwifery Education Committee. The programme team have a range of expertise to support the delivery of the programme. The programme will also use visiting lecturers.
- An annual review process ensures budgets for each college are appropriate for delivering all targets, including learner intakes. A five-year forward planning process ensures longer-term strategy. These processes ensure the education provider can sustain the delivery of all programmes and is responsive to planned changes in learner numbers. There are facilities including lecture and small group teaching rooms, computer clusters, clinical skills teaching, a dedicated medical library, and private study space. Sessions will take place in facilities with access to appropriate learning resources including computers, clinical skills equipment, and patient simulators. Other resources, include handbooks, course material, key texts, and a range of e-learning resources, for example Medicines Complete, will be available through the virtual learning environment, Canvas. Learners are expected to engage with a range of resources, and this will be evidenced through development and submission of the portfolio through 'Pebblepad'.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) programme lead on the Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing programme, which sits in the School of Pharmacy, will become the Programme Director for the proposed programme.
- All resources are already in place.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
Practice Certificate in Independent and Supplementary Prescribing	Part time	Supplementary and independent prescribing	40 learners, 2 cohorts per year	01/09/2023

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

Data / intelligence considered

We also considered intelligence from others (eg prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- NHS England, formerly Health Education England (HEE) Midlands, informed us of pressures related to the availability of practice-based learning in the Midlands. The information was reviewed but we considered it would not impact on this assessment.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. 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 met our standards.

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the [Findings section](#).

Quality theme 1 – teaching and assessment of the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (the Standards)

Area for further exploration: The education provider informed us professional expectations of learners are taught and assessed throughout the programme. They

stated case studies and scenarios explore the legal and ethical implications of decision-making and professional practice. The visitors also noted learning outcomes of the programme align to the teaching and assessment of the Standards. For example, learning outcome 1.5: Demonstrate an understanding and practical application of the legal, ethical, and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to safe and cost-effective prescribing practice. However, the visitors could not see any explicit reference within the programme documents to the Standards being taught and assessed in the programme. They therefore sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us learners consider areas such as professional practice, legal and ethical implications against the Prescribing Governance competences within the portfolio during their time in practice-based learning. They informed us alignment and recognition of professional standards and codes of practice is also required in the reflective pieces within the portfolio. The visitors noted the portfolio introduction page highlighted professional responsibility to the regulatory body.

The education provider provided programme information from the induction and lectures where legal and ethical frameworks for prescribing practice are discussed. They informed us both refer to regulatory body standards and codes of practice. The education provider also informed us learners are required to relate to their professional standards when considering issues such as professionalism and legal and ethical framework. The visitors were informed learners undertake work, such as an event analysis, which is mapped to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) competencies and the Standards.

The education provider also provided multi-professional scenarios. They use these as part of role play activities which allow for consideration of professional standards and codes of practice. The visitors noted core characteristics which are highlighted in regulatory standards and codes of practice are explored in relation to key prescribing scenarios. For example, promoting and protecting the interests of service users and carers, effective communication, working within scope of practice, delegating appropriately, and respecting confidentiality. Learners are required to explore their own professional regulation standards and consider the appropriate behaviour expected.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence provided assured them the Standards are taught and assessed in the programme.

Quality theme 2 – how the programme remains up to date

Area for further exploration: The education provider informed us the programme is built upon an enquiry-based learning approach. They stated this provides learners with a comprehensive and clear understanding of the principles of safe and effective prescribing. We were also informed the Independent Prescribing Programme Committee has representation from practice partners, practice educators and service users. The education provider stated this was to ensure curriculum development is informed by current practice. However, the visitors were unclear whether the education provider had used curriculum guidance to ensure the programme remains current. The visitors sought more information about how curriculum guidance has been used to make sure the programme remains current regarding the philosophy, core values, knowledge, and skills of the relevant profession.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us the curriculum is informed by the RPS Competency Framework for all Prescribers. They added they use the Allied Health Professions Federation Outline Curriculum Framework (OCF) as supplementary information and historical context for learners who are HCPC registrants. The education provider stated the philosophy and principles of the HCPC Standards for continuing professional development, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and Standards for prescribing are reflected in the programme's curriculum and assessment strategies.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence provided assured them the programme remains current regarding the philosophy, core values, knowledge, and skills of a profession.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Standards for education providers A: Admissions –**
 - Applicants initially apply via the education provider's admissions portal. If an initial screening of the application meets the academic entry requirements, applicants complete a Supplementary Application Form. This provides further information regarding the applicant's and to ensure an appropriate level of supervision is in place.
 - Applicants need to be currently registered with the HCPC and the appropriate professional body.
 - Applicants need a BSc / BA Honours degree or equivalent. The degree should normally be a first or upper second-class Honours degree. They should have normally at least three years relevant post-qualification experience in the clinical area in which they will be prescribing.
 - They need to be professionally practicing as an advanced practitioner, or an equivalent level.
 - Applicants need written confirmation from their employer / sponsor of their support for the applicant to undertake the programme. The employer / sponsor needs to provide practice education.
 - Applicants need to have an identified practice educator who meets the eligibility criteria for the supervision of learners and has agreed to provide the minimum of 90 hours practice education.
 - Applicants need to provide a satisfactory current enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) statement.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **Standards for education providers B: Programme governance, management and leadership –**
 - The Programme Management Committee meets to review provision, feedback, and enhancements to the programme. There is also representation from learners, service users and carers, and practice educators. Other stakeholders are invited to support development and enhance of the programme.
 - The programme management plan details the team structure, roles, and responsibilities. It includes lines of accountability to follow up any

concerns raised by learners, practice educators and staff, and fitness to practice processes. The programme is led by the Programme Director who has overall responsibility for the programme.

- The personal academic tutor and learner will have regular meetings and two mandatory tri-partite meetings with the practice educator. These are to review engagement and progression, provide support and signpost if needed.
 - The curriculum vitae of the programme team demonstrate they have a range of specialist expertise and knowledge to support the design and delivery of the programme. All programme staff, except for one individual, are dedicated to teaching on the proposed programme. The programme team will only be teaching on this new programme. The visitors understood the cohort sizes are capped at 25 which gave a staff: student ration of 1:14.
 - Facilities for the programme include learning spaces, such as small group teaching rooms, computer clusters, and dedicated medical library. Learners and educators have access to resources such as clinical skills equipment and patient simulators.
 - The education provider uses Canvas as the virtual learning environment. Learning materials are available through Canvas. The education provider uses PebblePad for learners to evidence work-based learning activities and to sign-off practice-based learning.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **Standards for education providers C: Programme design and delivery –**
 - Programme and module learning outcomes have been informed by the RPS Framework for all Prescribers (2021) competencies. This is demonstrated through mapping of the Framework to the Module Learning Outcomes. RPS competencies are assessed in practice. All learning outcomes must be passed. No compensation is allowed.
 - As detailed in [quality theme 1](#), the professional expectations of a prescriber are discussed throughout the programme. Case studies and communication scenarios explore legal and ethical implications of decisions. Learning outcomes align to the teaching and assessment of the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
 - Learning on campus is supported by practice education. Learner's development is supported by a varied teaching and learning approach. This includes distance learning, campus-based teaching days, individual tutorials, and practice education. Study days involve a variety of interactive sessions and workshops with peer-to-peer learning.
 - Learners are introduced to reflective practice from the start of the programme. Reflective skills are developed throughout the programme and practice education.
 - Evidence-based decision-making is embedded throughout the programme. Learners develop skills in applying review methods to

support reasoning when looking at case studies and clinical management plans.

- Programme content and delivery is subject to ongoing review. This is to ensure the programme takes account of current practice and remains up to date. As detailed in [quality theme 2](#), the curriculum is informed by the RPS Competency Framework for all Prescribers. The Outline Curriculum Framework (OCF) is used as supplementary information and historical context for learners who are HCPC registrants.
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **Standards for education providers D: Practice-based learning –**
 - Learners are required to undertake practice-based learning. This enables learners to put theory into practice, and to develop and demonstrate competence as a prescriber under the supervision of an experienced practice educator.
 - The practice educator assesses the achievement of the learning outcomes and RPS prescribing competencies. Learners are required to complete a minimum of 90 hours practice education.
 - The area of practice is subject to an audit by the education provider to ensure appropriate supervision and a range of learning opportunities.
 - RPS competencies are included in the structured reflective portfolio in PebblePad.
 - The education provider liaises with practice educators regularly about the progress of a learner. There is also a mandatory tri-partite meeting between learner, practice educator and academic assessor.
 - Practice educators have access to resources via PebblePad. For example, the Practice Supervision and Assessment Handbook and Portfolio Handbook. The education provider provides training for practice educators on areas such as:
 - The programme in which they will be working, including learning outcomes
 - Conducting objective, evidence-based assessments of learners
 - Providing constructive feedback
 - Knowledge of the assessment process and the practice educators role within it
 - Supporting learners
 - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **Standards for education providers E: Assessment –**
 - Learners complete a reflective portfolio to evidence how they achieve each competency. The portfolio is reviewed by the academic assessor and practice educator, and moderated by a programme tutor.

- The programme has a range of appropriate assessments to ensure learners achieve the programme learning outcomes. For example, case study and event analyses. Assessments are detailed in the module specifications and programme specification.
- Compensation of individual assessment components or modules is not available. Learners have one additional attempt to pass any component of a module if they fail it. Clinical mistakes in any module component will lead to failure of the module, irrespective of module mark, and therefore the learner will fail the programme.
- As detailed in [quality theme 1](#), the professional expectations of a prescriber are assessed throughout the programme. Case studies and communication scenarios explore legal and ethical implications of decisions. Learning outcomes align to the teaching and assessment of the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (the Standards).
- The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Section 5: Referrals

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

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

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. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- All standards are met, and therefore the programmes should be approved

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on approval. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation, and the nature, quality and facilities of the provision.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
University of Birmingham	CAS-01415-V9M5P5	Nick Haddington and Rosie Furner	<p>Through this assessment, we have noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved. 	<p>The programme will be led by the Programme Director who has overall responsibility for all aspects of the programme. They will be supported by the Head of Postgraduate Taught and CPD, the Head of Education and the Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The Programme Management Committee meets three times per year. They provide feedback to the School of Nursing and Midwifery Education Committee. The programme team have a range of expertise in education and clinical practice to support the delivery of the programme. The programme will also use visiting lecturers.</p> <p>An annual review process ensures budgets for each college are appropriate for delivering all targets, including predicted learner intakes. A five-year forward planning process ensures longer term strategic changes. These processes ensure the education provider can sustain the delivery of all programmes and is sufficiently responsive to</p>

				<p>planned changes in learner numbers. There is access to facilities including lecture and small group teaching rooms, computer clusters, clinical skills teaching, a dedicated medical library, and private study space. Sessions are scheduled in facilities with access to appropriate learning resources including computers, clinical skills equipment, and patient simulators. Other resources include handbooks, course material, key texts, and a range of e-learning resources including Medicines Complete, Script e-learning, i-clinical & Acland will be available through the virtual learning environment, Canvas. Learners are expected to engage with a range of resources. This will be evidenced through development and submission of the portfolio through 'Pebblepad'.</p> <p>The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) programme lead on the School of Pharmacy programme will become the Programme Director for the Independent Prescribing programme in the School of Nursing and Midwifery in September 2023.</p> <p>All resources are in place.</p>
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Programmes		
Programme name	Mode of study	Nature of provision
Practice Certificate in Independent and Supplementary Prescribing	Part time	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1997
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FLX (Flexible)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2005
MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2005
Applied Educational and Child Psychology (D.Ed.Psy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Educational psychologist		01/01/2005
Clinical Psychology Doctorate (ClinPsyD)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/01/1992
Doctorate in Forensic Psychology Practice (ForenPsyD)	PT (Part time)	Practitioner psychologist	Forensic psychologist		01/01/2002
Doctorate in Forensic Psychology Practice (ForenPsyD)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Forensic psychologist		01/01/2002
Forensic Clinical Psychology Doctorate (ForenClinPsyD)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist; Forensic psychologist		01/09/2013
Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2020