

Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
<b>Programme name</b>	IHCD Paramedic Award
<b>Validating body/awarding body</b>	IHCD (part of Edexcel)
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Block release
<b>Relevant part of HPC register</b>	Paramedic
<b>Date of visit</b>	16 and 17 September 2008

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## Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 13 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Paramedic' must be registered with us. The HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 20 May 2009. At the Committee meeting on 20 May 2009, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

## Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was an approved programme which had not been approved since the publication of the QAA subject benchmark statements. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was an HPC only visit. The education provider and validating/awarding body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

**Visit details**

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Mr Marcus Bailey (Paramedic) Mr Glynn Harding (Paramedic) Mr Gordon Burrow (Podiatrist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ms Mandy Hargood
Proposed student numbers	12
Initial approval	September 2000
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	June 2009
Chair	Ms Tracey Pigeon (London Ambulance Service NHS Trust)
Secretary	Ms Nina Hilton (London Ambulance Service NHS Trust)

## Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider.

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review a programme specification or external examiners' reports prior to the visit as these documents do not exist.

During the visit the HPC saw the following groups or facilities;

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators/mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (e.g. specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 48 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 15 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors agreed that the education provider may wish to discuss some of these conditions with the validating/awarding body before attempting to respond to the conditions.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme. Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

The visitors have also made a commendation. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

## Conditions

### **2.2.2 The admission procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal conviction checks.**

**Condition:** The education provider must rewrite the admissions procedure to include enhanced criminal conviction checks as part of the entry criteria to the programme.

**Reason:** During discussions with the senior team, it became clear that the education provider does not require an enhanced criminal conviction check as it considered that the paramedic does not have significant contact with vulnerable patients. However the visitors felt that the education provider should carry out enhanced checks to ensure that any criminal conviction that might potentially put vulnerable patients at risk was noted. Therefore the visitors would like to receive a revised admissions procedure to include an enhanced criminal conviction check.

### **3.3 There must be a named programme leader who has overall responsibility for the programme and who should be either on the relevant part of the HPC register or otherwise appropriately qualified and experienced.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide a document that details the management of the programme if the programme leader should be unavailable.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that the programme leader was clearly named and had overall responsibility for the programme; however, the visitors were unsure what mechanisms were in place to take over the programme leadership if the programme leader was unavailable for any period. During discussions with the senior team it was clear that there was a line of succession to cover possible absences of the programme leader. The staff who would ensure that the programme leadership role would be covered were appropriately qualified to fulfil programme leader position. As this was not documented prior to the visit, the visitors would like to receive evidence of the line of succession to cover programme leader absence.

### **3.4 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff in place to deliver an effective programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide revised descriptors for all sections of Module J to include the section co-ordinators names.

**Reason:** The visitors received the descriptors for Module J prior to the visit and noted that there was only one member of staff listed as a section co-ordinator. During discussions with the programme team it was clear that the team had designated section co-ordinators but these names had not been included in the descriptors prior to the visit. The visitors were happy that the proposed section co-ordinators were appropriately qualified having viewed all the curriculum vitae prior to the visit. The visitors would like to receive revised descriptors for Module J with the named co-ordinators included to ensure that there are sufficient staff to support Module J.

**4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme to clearly reflect the following standards of proficiency and demonstrate how these learning outcomes are addressed and assessed.

Registrant paramedics must:

**1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**

- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing.

**1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- be able to use a range of integrated skills and self-awareness to manage clinical challenges effectively in unfamiliar circumstances or situations.

**1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers**

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team.
- understand the need to engage patients, clients, users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals.
- be able to make appropriate referrals.
- understand the range and limitations of operational relationships between paramedics and other healthcare professionals.
- recognise the principles and practices of other healthcare professionals and healthcare systems and how they interact with the role of a paramedic.

**2a.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques**

- be able to use observation to gather information about the functional abilities of patients.
- understand the need to consider the assessment of both the health and social care needs of patients and carers.

**2b.1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate actions**

- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice.
- be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically,



- and participate in audit procedures.
- be aware of a range of research methodologies.
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving.
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice.

**2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales**

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors.
- understand the need to demonstrate sensitivity to the factors which shape lifestyle that may impact on the individual's health and affect the interaction between the patient and paramedic.

**2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly**

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care.
- be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user.
- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes.
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately.

**2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice**

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance.
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures.
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement.
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate.
- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection.
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review.

**3a.1 know the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice**

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with a knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction.

- know human anatomy and physiology, sufficient to understand the nature and effects of injury or illness, and to conduct assessment and observation in order to establish patient management strategies.
- understand the following aspects of behavioural science:
  - psychological and social factors that influence an individual in health and illness.
  - how psychology and sociology can inform an understanding of physical and mental health, illness and health care in the context of paramedic practice and the incorporation of this knowledge into paramedic practice.
- how aspects of psychology and sociology are fundamental to the role of the paramedic in developing and maintaining effective relationships.
- understand the following aspects of clinical science.
  - pathological changes and related clinical features of conditions commonly encountered by paramedics.
  - principles of evaluation and research methodologies which enable the integration of theoretical perspectives and research evidence into the design and implementation of effective paramedic practice.
  - the theories supporting problem solving and clinical reasoning.

**Reason:** Although the visitors received all the modules for the programme and its constituent components prior to the visit, there was insufficient evidence provided for the visitors to judge if all of the above standards of proficiency had been met. During discussions with the programme team it was clear that module J was being developed with the education provider's partner institution to ensure that all the standards of proficiency were addressed. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation detailing how the standards of proficiency are taught and assessed.

#### **4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate where the teaching of exacerbatory illness, minor injuries and minor illness occurs within the programme as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.

**Reason:** Although the document provided for the visit indicated that the teaching of exacerbatory illness, minor injuries and minor illness was taught within Module J Health Promotion section the visitors considered that there was insufficient detail provided in the module to support this. Therefore the visitors would like to receive a revised Module J detailing where the teaching of exacerbatory illness, minor injuries and minor illness is taught to reflect the curriculum guidance for the profession.

#### **4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate how the programme is relevant to current practice.

**Reason:** During the meeting with the programme team it was clear that Module J had been designed to ensure that students had the opportunity to reflect on change in care practices and current research to enable them to respond to change in practice within the profession. The visitors considered that there was insufficient detail to support this. Therefore the visitors would like to receive a revised Module J detailing how the curriculum is relevant to current practice.

#### **4.5 The delivery of the programme must assist autonomous and reflective thinking and evidence based practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate how the programme assists autonomous and reflective thinking and evidence based practice.

**Reason:** During the meetings with the students and the programme team it was clear that there was autonomous and reflective thinking and evidence based practice within the programme and students were encouraged to discuss issues with their peers and practice placement educators. However the visitors considered that this had not been clearly documented. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation detailing how the module assists autonomous and reflective thinking and evidence based practice.

#### **5.2 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate that there is a sufficient number of practice placement educators.

**Reason:** During the meeting with the students the visitors noted that there had been some confusion over who the assigned practice placement educator for each student was. In some cases the student paramedic did not have access to their practice placement educator if there was another observer (eg nurse) placed with their practice placement educator at that time. In the meeting with the programme team the visitors were informed that the education provider was training practice placement educators so that there would be one student assigned to one practice placement educator and that no student paramedic would have their training interrupted by the need to train another observer. Therefore the visitors would like to receive documentation that details the policy for assigning practice placement educators with student paramedics that also reflects the number of practice placement educators to student paramedics.

#### **6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate the assessment design procedures for Module J to ensure that the student paramedic can demonstrate fitness to practice.

**Reason:** From the visitors reading of the documentation provided prior to the visit it was unclear how the assessment design for Module J demonstrated fitness to practice. During the meeting with the programme team it was clear how the module was to be taught, marked and assessed. The visitors would like to see this reflected within the documentation for module J in order for them to fully

determine whether the assessment design and procedures ensure students demonstrate fitness to practice.

**6.2 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practice safely and effectively.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate the assessment methods for Module J to ensure that the student paramedic can demonstrate that they can practice safely and effectively.

**Reason:** In the documentation provided before the visit the visitors could not determine the assessment methods employed to measure the learning outcomes that allow the students to demonstrate that they can practice safely and effectively. During the meeting with the programme team the visitors were informed that the education provider was in discussions with its partner institution to develop assessment methods that measure the learning outcomes and skills of the students effectively. Therefore the visitors would like to receive documentation which includes the revised assessment methods for Module J that will measure the learning outcomes to ensure that the students can practice safely and effectively.

**6.3 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external reference frameworks can be measured.**

**Condition:** The education provider must revise the assessment policy for the pre entry component TDP 03 to reflect the correct pass mark.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in their reading of the documentation that the stated pass mark for the pre study component TDP 03 was inaccurate. During discussions with the programme team it was admitted that there had been an error in the pass mark recorded in the documentation. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation that has the correct assessment policy for TDP 03.

**6.5 There must be effective mechanisms in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessment.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate the appropriate standards for assessment for Module J.

**Reason:** In the documentation provided for the visit there was no clear indication how Module J would be moderated. During the meeting with the programme team the visitors were told that policies regarding moderation were being developed with the education provider's partner institution. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation for Module J that details how the module will be moderated.

## **6.6 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate within Module J where professional aspects of practice are met within the assessment procedure in both the education and practice placement setting.

**Reason:** In discussions with the programme team it was noted that Module J would ensure that there were assessment procedures to cover professional aspects of practice in both education and practice in line with the other modules for the programme. As the descriptors for Module J were not complete it was difficult for the visitors to determine if the assessment procedures in both the education setting and the practice placement setting were met. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation for Module J detailing how this standard is met.

### **6.7.4 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly articulate the procedure for the right of appeal for students for Module J.

**Reason:** During the meeting with the programme team the visitors were informed that the appeals policy for Module J would follow the appeals procedure already followed for the paramedic programme. The visitors would like to receive revised documentation for Module J detailing the appeals procedure for students for this module.

### **6.7.5 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register or propose alternative arrangements.

**Reason:** From the documentation and discussion with the programme team it was apparent that there was no external examiner for the programme. The visitors recognise that the validating/awarding body visits the education provider every year to assess the programme against their rules and regulations. However, the visitors did not feel this was the equivalent of an external examiner's review of a The assessment regulations did not reflect this and the visitors would therefore like to receive confirmation documentation that clearly specifies the requirement for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed.

## Recommendations

### **2.2.4 The admission procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider developing a monitoring framework to assess the attainment of learning/experiential learning.

**Reason:** The visitors were content that the entry criteria for the programme met the threshold for the programme entry. However the visitors would suggest that the education provider looks at developing a monitoring framework to look at trends from students accessing the programme from different entry standards. In doing this it would offer the education provider the opportunity to evaluate its entry standards for future entry to the programme.

### **5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should review the number, duration and range of placements in line with the experiential learning as described in the professional body guidelines.

**Reason:** The visitors were content that this standard had been met. The visitors recognised the placement activities the students took part in were varied and were appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes. However they considered the student experience could be enhanced by including the additional placements described in the professional body guidelines.

## Commendations

The visitors wish to commend the following aspects of the programme,

**Commendation:** The visitors wish to commend the education provider on the exceptional staff/student support network, especially the LINC system.

**Reason:** The visitors considered that the support network that was available at all times for both the staff and students was extensive in services and availability. The LINC service in particular was seen as best innovative practice in its 24 hour operation and the counselling services it provided.

Mr Marcus Bailey  
Mr Glyn Harding  
Mr Gordon Burrow