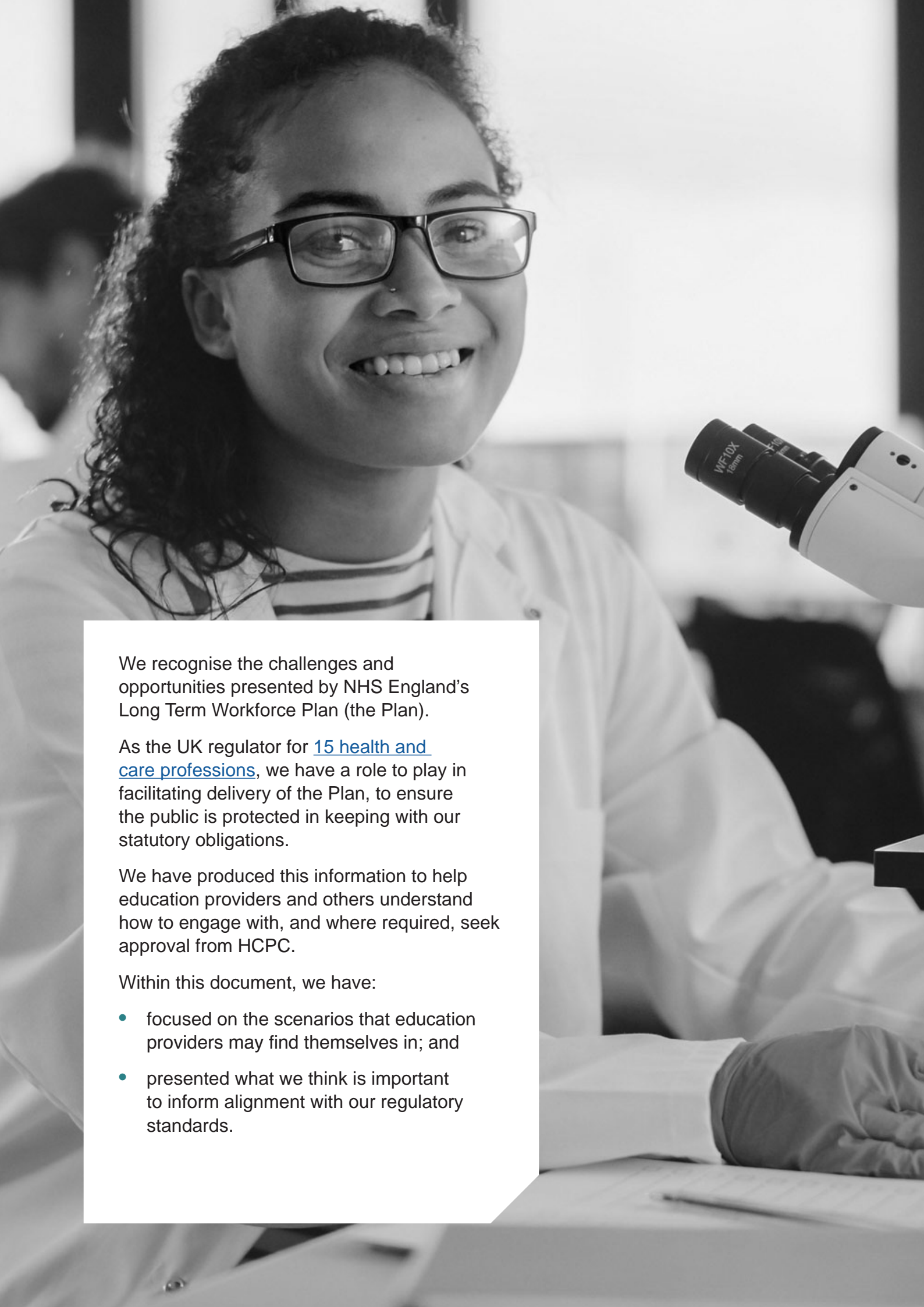


Responding to NHSE  
Long Term Workforce Plan:  
A guide for education  
providers

---



We recognise the challenges and opportunities presented by NHS England's Long Term Workforce Plan (the Plan).

As the UK regulator for [15 health and care professions](#), we have a role to play in facilitating delivery of the Plan, to ensure the public is protected in keeping with our statutory obligations.

We have produced this information to help education providers and others understand how to engage with, and where required, seek approval from HCPC.

Within this document, we have:

- focused on the scenarios that education providers may find themselves in; and
- presented what we think is important to inform alignment with our regulatory standards.

# Contents

---

Scenarios which require regulatory assessment by the HCPC	5
What to do if you're planning a new programme	8
Maintaining approval in changing circumstances	12
Informing us about changes to existing programmes	12
How we normally monitor HCPC-approved programmes	13
Considering our standards of education and training (SETs)	14
Innovations and alignment to our standards	16
Your role in meeting our standards	16
Growing the pool of academic staff	16
Education provider resources	17
Innovations in practice-based learning	18



# Scenarios which require regulatory assessment by the HCPC

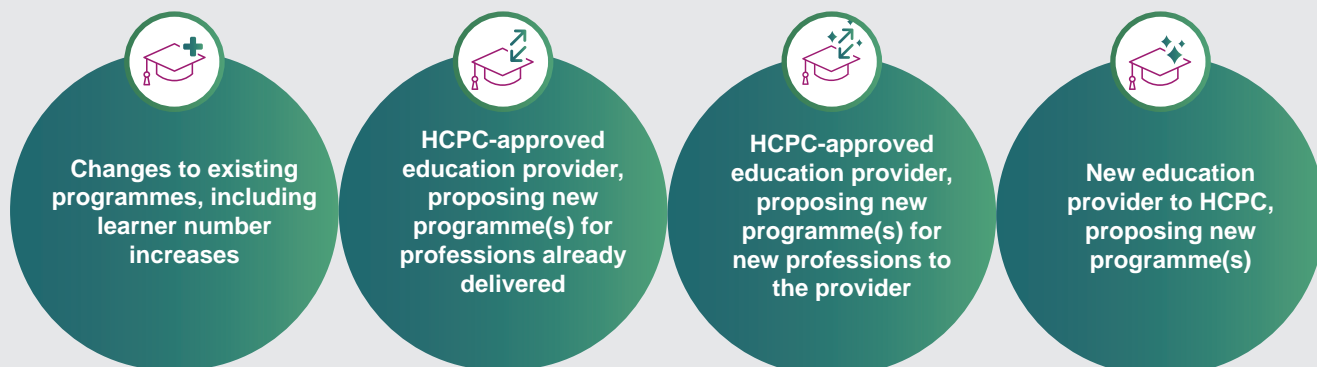
We need to review new education programme proposals and changes to existing education programmes to consider if they meet our **education standards**.

These standards ensure that learners meet our requirements for registration on completion of HCPC-approved programmes.





There are a wide variety of responses to the plan which will be led or managed by education providers, including:

- ✓ increases to existing learner numbers;
- ✓ new programmes, including degree apprenticeship programmes – by ‘new programme’ we mean a new award, and / or a new model of learning for a profession (eg apprenticeship programme); and
- ✓ closing existing programmes, which may or may not be replaced by the education provider.

## There are four scenarios that will require some form of regulatory engagement with the HCPC



# Scenarios which require regulatory assessment

	Regulatory process	When to engage with us
 <p><b>Changes to existing programmes, including learner number increases</b></p>	<p>Normally none at this time – although you should consider whether there is anything <b>major</b> which we might need to review.</p> <p>Reflection through your next scheduled <b>performance review</b> submission.</p>	<p>If you consider there is anything <b>major</b> to raise with us, you should speak to your <a href="#">key contact</a>.</p> <p>We will request your engagement with our performance review requirements in the summer before your submission is due.</p> <p>Your next engagement was (or will be) set on completion of your last performance review assessment.</p>
 <p><b>HCPC-approved education provider, proposing new programme(s) for professions already delivered</b></p>	<p><b><u>New programme approval</u></b></p>	<p>We need to approve new programmes before they start.</p> <p>We ask that you <a href="#">speak to us</a> as soon as possible if you are considering running a new programme, and complete a <a href="#">form</a> to formally begin the assessment process.</p>
 <p><b>HCPC-approved education provider, proposing new programme(s) for new professions to the provider</b></p>	<p><b><u>New programme approval</u></b></p>	<p>We need to approve new programmes before they start.</p> <p>We ask that you <a href="#">speak to us</a> as soon as possible if you are considering running a new programme, and complete a <a href="#">form</a> to formally begin the assessment process.</p>
 <p><b>New education provider to HCPC, proposing new programme(s)</b></p>	<p><b><u>New programme approval</u></b></p>	<p>We need to approve new programmes before they start.</p> <p>We ask that you <a href="#">speak to us</a> as soon as possible if you are considering running a new programme, and complete a <a href="#">form</a> to formally begin the assessment process.</p>

Level of engagement required	Timescales regulatory approval	What this looks and feels like
Low	N/A – prior approval normally not needed to make changes of this nature.	<p>Self-reflective portfolio submission to include information about changes and how they have been managed</p> <p>Potential exploration of information as part of <a href="#">quality activities</a> through the assessment.</p>
Medium	Defined through the formal process, and influenced by your readiness and the proposed programme start date – normally 4-6 months from your documentary submission.	<p>Assessment of new programme alignment with existing provision.</p> <p>Detailed review of new programme(s) against our programme level standards</p> <p>Consideration of existing programme structures and information through this review.</p> <p>Potential exploration of information as part of <a href="#">quality activities</a> through the assessment.</p>
Medium	Defined through the formal process, and influenced by your readiness and the proposed programme start date – normally 4-6 months from your documentary submission.	<p>Assessment of new programme alignment with existing provision.</p> <p>Detailed review of new programme(s) against our programme level standards</p> <p>Potential exploration of information as part of <a href="#">quality activities</a> through the assessment.</p>
High	Defined through the formal process, and influenced by your readiness and the proposed programme start date – normally 6-9 months from your documentary submission.	<p>Detailed review of the institution against our institution level standards.</p> <p>Detailed review of new programme(s) against our programme level standards</p> <p>Potential exploration of information as part of <a href="#">quality activities</a> through the assessment.</p>

# What to do if you're planning a new programme

We assess education providers and new programmes to ensure they are properly organised to deliver education and train learners to meet our requirements for registration.

We focus on whether education providers and programmes meet our **standards of education and training (SET)**.

We undertake assessments in two stages:

## Stage 1: Institution level assessment

If you are new to HCPC, you first need to actively demonstrate that you meet our [institution-level standards](#).

If you already deliver HCPC-approved programmes, we will consider how the new proposal aligns with existing HCPC-approved programmes.

## Stage 2: Programme level assessment

Once we are satisfied you have met Stage 1 requirements, we focus our Stage 2 assessment on [reviewing the specific programme proposed](#).

You should review our **standards**, to ensure you understand the purpose and focus of each standard and can engage with the assessment as fully as possible.



## Timescales

We ask that education providers give us as much notice as possible of their intention to deliver new programmes, so we have sufficient time to consider the application. We aim to complete our assessments flexibly, considering education provider needs, but do need to fully consider whether our standards are met before a new programme can start.

We aim to complete assessments within nine months for new education providers, and six months for HCPC-approved education providers. This timeframe can be extended where there are problems with meeting our standards, if proposals are not fully developed when we are asked to assess them, or if education providers do not give us sufficient notice of their intention to run a new programme.

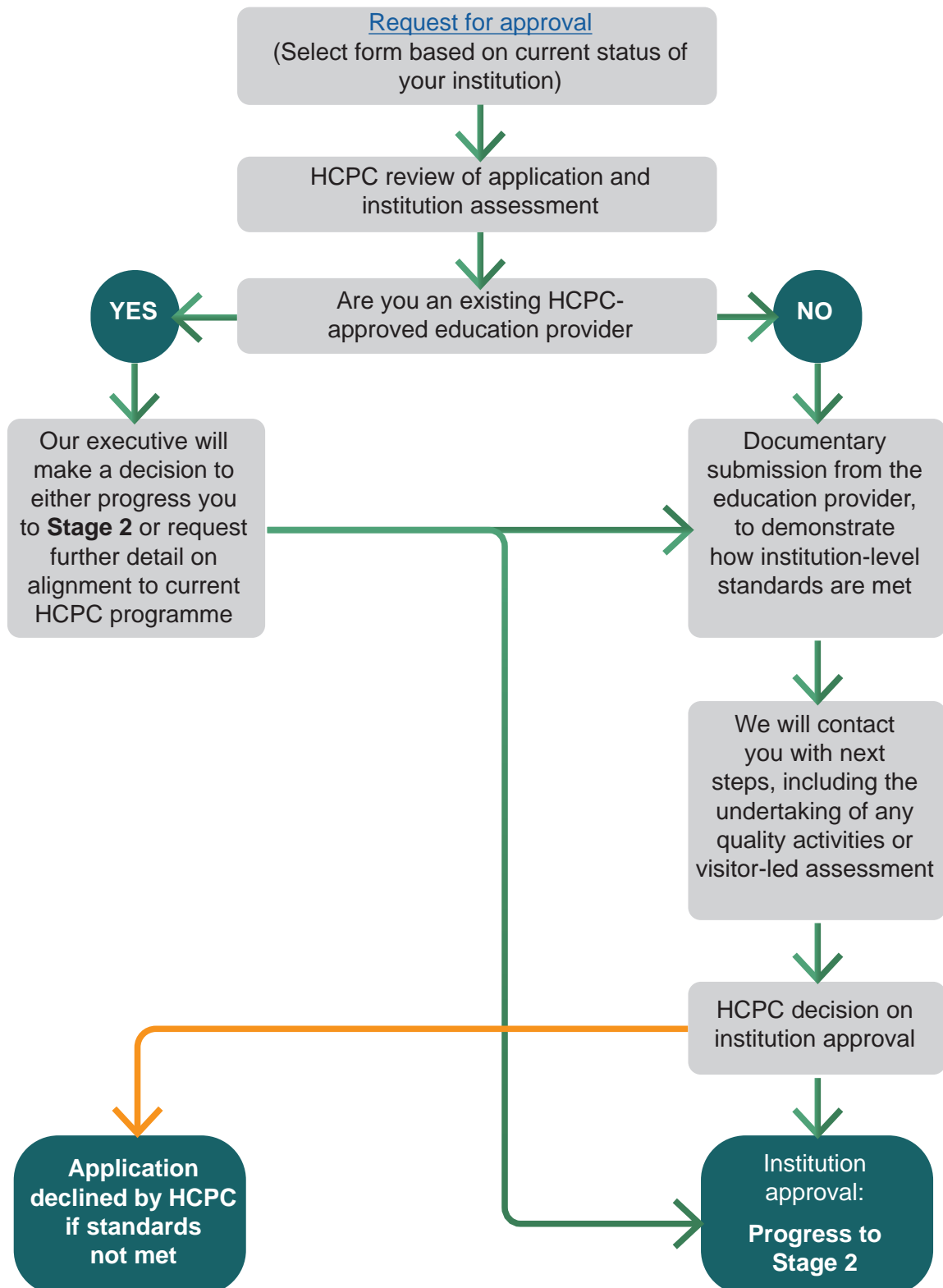
Once you submit a completed form, we will contact you within two weeks with next steps, and through the assessment will provide an assessment plan with key dates for your engagement. You will have a named contact at the HCPC throughout your assessment, who will be able to help you at each stage.

### Find out more:

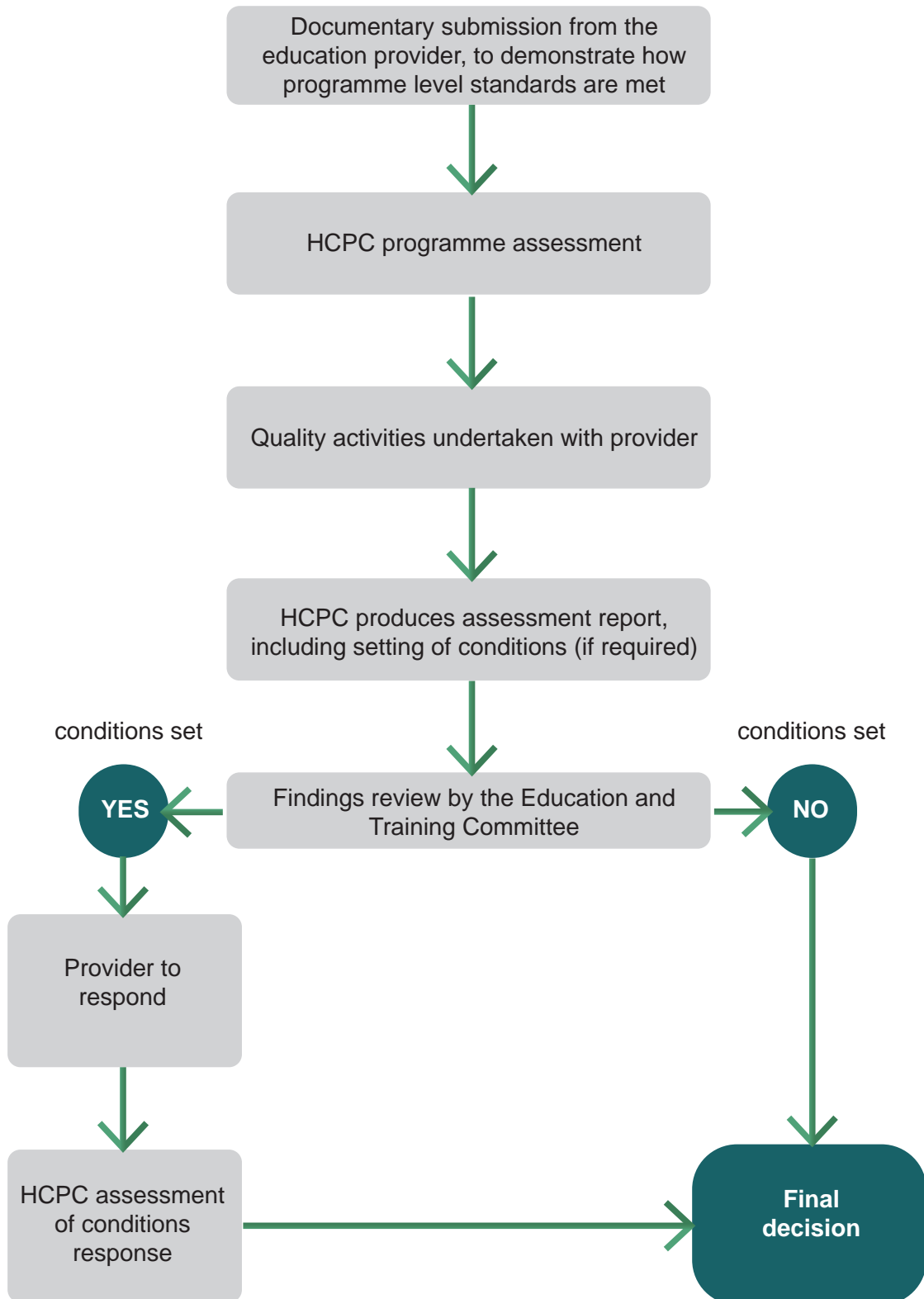
We have a [guidance document](#) and [e-learning module](#) with an overview of the approval process, and how this looks and feels for education providers.



## Stage 1: Institution level assessment



## Stage 2: Programme level assessment



# Maintaining approval in changing circumstances

## Informing us about changes to existing programmes

We normally won't need to review or approve changes to existing programmes to deliver the intentions of the Plan in advance of you making those changes. However, you should consider the following when considering if you need to engage with us now.

**You DO** need to inform HCPC of significant changes to your provision, such as:

- ✓ Significant financial or resourcing difficulties, which might impact on learners progressing through approved programmes.
- ✓ Significant change to physical resourcing in order to accommodate new learners or additional programmes, such as a campus move or development of new clinical resources.
- ✓ Significant changes to your approach to education, such as provision-wide curricula review which results in substantial changes to content and your approach to delivery.

**You DO NOT** need to inform HCPC of granular changes to your institution or programme, such as:

- ✗ Outcomes from internal cyclical reviews.
- ✗ Changes to learner numbers, if those changes are managed within your resourcing model.
- ✗ Personnel changes.

## How we normally monitor HCPC-approved programmes

Our performance review process periodically assesses education providers' performance, linked to a series of themes we consider important to show continued alignment with our standards.

We expect that most changes made to existing programmes in response to the Plan can be considered through education provider engagement with our performance review process.

Through the assessment, we will make a decision about whether we need to follow up any areas through further assessments, and when we should next

review the education provider (this can be between one to five years). We review education providers who show a high level of performance less frequently than those who do not. This links to our risk-based approach to quality assurance.

### Find out more:

We have a [guidance document](#) and [e-learning module](#) giving an overview of the performance review process, and how this looks and feels for education providers.

## Purpose of the process

To periodically engage with providers to understand their performance. Through this process, we are seeking to gain assurance regarding the institution's continued alignment to our education standards.

### Process stages



# Considering our standards of education and training (SETs)

As part of our approval and monitoring activities, we use the SETs to ensure education providers deliver learners who meet our requirements for registration when they complete their programme. By this, we mean they must meet our requirements for registration, namely our [standards of proficiency \(SOPs\)](#) and [standards of conduct, performance and ethics](#).

We expect adherence to our SETs to be at the very forefront of education providers' considerations when delivering education and training, expanding their provision, and developing new programmes.

You can read our standards in full on our [website](#).

There are [six sections](#) to our SETs:

<b>SET 1</b>	Level of qualification for entry to the register	<b>SET 4</b>	Programme design and delivery
<b>SET 2</b>	Programme administration	<b>SET 5</b>	Practice-based learning
<b>SET 3</b>	Programme governance, management and leadership	<b>SET 6</b>	Assessment



# Innovations and alignment to our standards

We expect to see education providers develop their provision in a number of ways, including increasing learner numbers and developing approaches to learning and teaching, including practice-based learning. All of these will naturally have implications for education providers, which they have a duty to prepare for.

Challenges may include:

- Increasing number of academic staff to develop and run programmes;
- physical education provider resources (from learning materials to teaching space); and
- practice-based learning capacity within complex regional and national systems.

## Your role in meeting our standards

We hold the education provider responsible for meeting our standards, but recognise system-wide solutions will often be needed to meet challenges linked to the Plan. Education providers may be able to take some actions on their own. For example, creative use of existing resources such as staggering learner entry throughout the year or smart timetabling.

Our standards should not be seen as restrictive or a barrier to innovation; they are there to provide a framework for you to safely expand and improve your education provision. Expanding your offer must not come at the expense of quality or safety. The challenges of achieving the goals of

the Plan offer a significant opportunity for education providers to think outside the box when developing their programmes.

## Growing the pool of academic staff

We expect there are ways for education providers to use their academic staff differently to enable learner number increases. As examples, this might be through:

- recruitment of additional support staff, to free up academics' time to focus on programme delivery and assessment;
- the use of academic staff from different professions to teach non-profession specific areas;
- continued and expanded use of 'guest lecturers';
- smart timetabling; and / or
- staggered programme start dates.

We recognise the existing pool of academic staff within specific professions may not enable an increase in learners across programmes, and that a shortage of new academic staff may be a barrier to delivering the Plan.

Some of the response to this will need to be centrally owned or facilitated, for example through delivery of NHSE's Educator Workforce Strategy.



Education providers can take more direct ownership of this challenge, in a number of ways, and there are many examples of good practice such as education providers considering ways into an academic career (like working with practice partners to second individuals from practice), and ensuring their learning and development offer supports new academic staff to succeed.

**You should consider the following standards when developing in this area:**

- There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme (SET 3.9).
- Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise (SET 3.10).
- An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators appropriate to their role in the programme (SET 3.11).

## Education provider resources

Similarly to the above section, we expect that there are ways for education providers to use their existing resources differently to enable learner increases. This might be through changes to the model(s)

of learning, smart timetabling, and / or staggered programme start dates.

Ultimately, increasing learner numbers will lead to a growth in income, but we recognise that with inflationary and cost of living pressures, costs per learner may be increasing.

We have often seen investment by education providers in:

- physical resources (such as specialist teaching space and materials);
- virtual resources and technologies (such as electronic teaching materials and virtual learning environments); and / or
- academic and pastoral support services for staff and learners.

**You should consider the following standards when developing in this area:**

- The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators (SET 3.12).
- There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings (SET 3.13).

## Innovations in practice-based learning

Practice-based learning offers exciting opportunities for innovation. We encourage education providers to consider exploring these and other areas of innovation on approved programmes, as long as the quality of teaching and learning is maintained.

Expansions in practice-based learning should not be considered in silos; there will be many education providers competing for practice-based learning within regions / nationally (depending on the size of the profession and number of programmes), and education providers need to come together with other bodies (like the NHSE Workforce, Training and Education directorate) to properly plan and deliver expansion.

It is important to remember that we do not set the number of placement days / hours, or a specific range of placement setting required. Education providers have control in this area – we encourage you to consider the duration and range of practice-based learning opportunities you make available to support the delivery of your curriculum.

## Technology-Enabled Care Service-based placements (TECs)

- TECs were implemented across many health and care services, as a result of restrictions placed on traditional care pathways by COVID-19 and changes in ways of working and learning post-pandemic.
- Embedding suitable TECs-based opportunities can form part of the overall profile education providers are looking to offer going forward, and we welcome education providers seeking to innovate in this area.

## Multidisciplinary approaches to practice-based learning

- Our standards for registrants are structured in such a way to recognise the common areas of knowledge, skills and abilities that all professions hold.
- Through the challenge of securing more practice-based learning opportunities, education providers have the opportunity within our standards to explore how 'non-traditional' practice settings could be used to support learners achieving the outcomes they require.
- Whilst we expect registered professionals to be involved in practice education, our standards support the use of practice educators from other professional backgrounds to provide learners with teaching and supervision, where this supports delivery of the learning outcomes and our standards of proficiency.
- This includes individuals on other statutory registers and the use of the wider healthcare workforce, where education providers consider this appropriate, and managed it well.

## Using simulation to support practice-based learning

- Simulation is currently used within professional training programmes to prepare learners to enter practice-based settings and to support the observation and assessment of practical skills in a controlled environment.
- In recent years, a common focus has been on exploring opportunities for simulation to be used more widely as a suitable learning experience. The intent is to explore to what extent simulation could function in an integrated way with the more traditional 'placement' learning experience, rather than being only viewed as an add-on to it.
- We support the collective effort being undertaken by workforce and employer led organisations alongside the professional bodies to develop a new consensus in this area.
- Our expectations within the context of our standards remain the same: education providers must ensure the practice experience in simulation is suitable to support the achievement of programme learning outcomes and our standards of proficiency.

## You should consider the following standards when developing in this area:

- There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers (SET 3.5).
- There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners (SET 3.6).
- The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency (SET 5.2).
- The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning (SET 5.3).
- Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users (SET 5.4).
- There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning (SET 5.5).
- Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register (SET 5.6).
- Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme (SET 5.7).

