HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Plymouth
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, Full time MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration), Full time MOccTH (Hons) Occupational Therapy, Full time Post Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration), Full time
Approval visit date	10-11 March 2020
Case reference	CAS-15048-M5W6C9

Contents

Executive Summary

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

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

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

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

Jennifer Caldwell	Occupational therapist
Joanne Stead	Occupational therapist
Temilolu Odunaike	HCPC executive

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

Paul Brunt	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Plymouth
Phil Gee	Independent deputy chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Plymouth
Joanne Melhuish	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Plymouth

Joan Healey	Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCoT)	Professional body
Dawn Mitchell	Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCoT)	Professional body
Clair Parkin	Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCoT)	Professional body
Fiona Maclean	External Advisor	
Eleanor Tunick	Student representative	University of Plymouth

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 September 2008
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 40
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02163

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment. The education provider proposed changes to this programme, which involved reviewing the curriculum alongside the introduction of a new Integrated Masters.

Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 September 2013
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02165

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment. The education provider proposed changes to this programme, which involved reviewing the curriculum alongside the introduction of a new Integrated Masters.

Programme name	Post Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)

Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 September 2013
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 5
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02231

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment. The education provider proposed changes to this programme, which involved reviewing the curriculum alongside the introduction of a new Integrated Masters.

Programme name	MOccTh (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02168

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

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

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

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes

Internal quality monitoring documentation	Yes

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice educators	Yes
Programme team	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 05 May 2020.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is a system in place for capturing learners' feedback and reviewing this feedback with all practice educators to ensure quality of practice-based learning.

Reason: In their evidence for this standard, the education provider submitted documents stating that practice educators are supported in their role through training, consultation, and avenues where they share 'best practice' and facilitate practical links between student support services, learners and their practice educators. Through their documentary review, the visitors noted that feedback from learners on their practice experience was not gathered consistently across all areas. They noted that feedback appeared to be gathered in statutory practice-based learning but was not shared routinely with the practice educators. They also noted that the private, voluntary and independent practice-based learning did not have access to the feedback system.

During discussions with the practice educators, the visitors heard that learners occasionally provide feedback on their practice-based learning to practice educators, as they are not currently required to do so. The practice educators explained that it would help to ensure quality if there was a system that required learners to provide feedback on their practice experience with their practice educators and ensures the feedback is shared with all practice educators.

The visitors considered that the education provider had not demonstrated that there is a robust system in place that allows learners to provide feedback in practice-based learning. They also considered that feedback is not gathered across all practice education providers, and not shared systematically. As such, they could not determine that the education provider had a thorough and effective system for ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.
The visitors therefore require the education provider to demonstrate that they have a thorough and effective system that captures all of learners' feedback in practice-based learning and ensures the feedback is used for quality assurance across all practice-based learning sites.

Recommendations
We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider introducing workshops that are appropriate to practice educators' role and learners' needs.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that this standard was met at threshold, as all the appropriate information to evidence practice educators were being offered a wide range of training according to their needs, was identified within the documentation.
The visitors noted however through discussions at the visit that practice educators sometimes struggle to support certain types of learner needs, for instance international learners who may be finding it difficult to acclimatise to the culture and system of learning in the United Kingdom. The practice educators indicated they could benefit from workshops that focused around internalisation to enhance their ability to support the learning needs of all learners. The visitors therefore suggest that, to ensure all practice educators are confident and appropriately prepared for their role, the education provider could consider introducing workshops that will enable practice educators in supporting learners' needs effectively and ensure all practice educators have access to such workshops.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 02 June 2020 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.