

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of East Anglia
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Degree Apprenticeship, Flexible
Approval visit date	01 – 02 May 2019
Case reference	CAS-14341-H3Y1N5

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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:

Rebecca Khanna	Occupational therapist
Joanna Goodwin	Occupational therapist
Manoj Mistry	Lay
Patrick Armsby	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.

Susanne Lindqvist	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of East Anglia – Professor of Interprofessional Practice, Norwich Medical School
Dawn Goff	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of East Anglia

Marnie Smith	Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCOT) Panel Member	Plymouth University – Programme Lead for BSc in Occupational Therapy
Ruth Heames	Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCOT) Panel Member	Coventry University – Principal Lead, Post Graduate Strategy Unit, Vice-Chancellor’s Office
Suzie Boyd	Royal College of Occupational Therapy (RCOT) Panel Member	RCOT – Education officer

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	FLX (Flexible)
Profession	Occupational therapist
First intake	01 September 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02052

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 require 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.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners’ reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	The panel met learners from the existing BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy programme that is delivered by the education provider and approved by the HCPC.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	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 27 June 2019.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that they have an effective process in place for identifying and appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme.

Reason: In order to evidence this standard before the visit, the education provider directed the visitors to the CV of the current programme lead. From this the visitors were able to confirm that the current programme lead is appropriately qualified and experienced. However they were unable to confirm how the education provider ensures that the person holding overall is appropriately qualified and experienced on a continuous basis. The CV provided only allowed the visitors to make a judgement on an individual basis. In the senior and programme team meeting the visitors questioned

about how a potential replacement for programme lead would be made and how the education provider would ensure they were appropriately qualified and experienced. The visitors were told that should a replacement be required, members of staff on the teaching team would share work duties between themselves and various members would “step up” to ensure the work would be carried out. While this approach may work in practice, the visitors found it to be heavily based on personal relationships rather than an established process and so could not confirm that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme will consistently be appropriately qualified and experienced. In particular, the visitors did not receive any evidence which articulates the requirements for fulfilling this role, or what the appointment process for this role would be. The education provider must therefore provide further evidence to demonstrate that policies and procedures are in place which ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified, experienced and from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are appropriate.

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.

2.4 The admissions process must assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider have their own process to assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.

Reason: In the documentary submission prior to the visit, the visitors were unclear on the how the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check was being monitored by the education provider. The documentation highlighted that the DBS check was carried out by the employer and the education provider would have access to this information. However, the documentation also suggested that the education provider would carry out their own DBS check as part of the admissions process. The visitors were able to clarify in the programme team meeting that the DBS check would be carried out by the employer and would in turn “assure” the university of the status of learners. The visitors were comfortable that this did meet the standard at threshold level but were unsure of the exact process how the employer “assures” the education provider. The visitors recommend that the education formalises the exact mechanism for ensuring that all applicants are suitable and have completed the relevant criminal conviction checks.

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 04 July 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC’s decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).