

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Coventry University
Name of programme(s)	MSc Occupational Therapy, Full time
Approval visit date	08-09 October 2019
Case reference	CAS-14816-L1C4R1

Contents

Section 1: Our regulatory approach	2
Section 2: Programme details.....	3
Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment.....	3
Section 4: Outcome from first review.....	4
Section 5: Visitors’ recommendation.....	5

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:

Diane Whitlock	Lay
Claire Brewis	Occupational therapist
Joanna Goodwin	Occupational therapist
Niall Gooch	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 Cashian	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Coventry University
Geovanna Mora Molina	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Coventry University
Caroline Grant	Education Officer	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Georgina Callister	Visitor	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Alison Hampson	Visitor	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

In the same week as this visit, a second HCPC panel considered the approval of another proposed new programme at Coventry University, the MSc Physiotherapy and Leadership.

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
Proposed first intake	01 September 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 25
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02109

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	Comments
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	No	Only requested if the programme (or a previous version) is currently running

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 06 December 2019.

6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

The following condition applies to the above standards. For simplicity, as the issue spans several standards, the education provider should respond to this condition as one issue.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that assessment in practice-based learning does not make unfair demands on learners

without previous experience, and that all learners are able to understand the requirements for progression through different levels of understanding and skill.

Reason: From their review of the evidence submitted regarding assessment and practice-based learning, the visitors were aware that learners would be expected to meet Master's level standards in the first assessment in the first placement. As this is a pre-registration Master's programme, learners may have relatively limited prior experience of the expectations and demands of the practical elements of a health professional programme. The visitors therefore considered that:

- Expecting learners to achieve at the Master's level straight away may not provide a fair and reliable measure of learners' achievement; and
- It might not be clear to learners how the progression of assessment would work within the programme, reflecting the development and deepening of their understanding and abilities.

The visitors therefore require further evidence that the education provider can ensure that learners' achievement in practice-based learning is measured in a fair and reliable way, reflecting the fact that their knowledge and skills will develop and improve through the placements and through the programme, and that it is clear to learners what is expected of them.

6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that all assessments in the practice-based learning modules are appropriate to Master's level learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors noted from their review of programme documentation that there was a disparity between the learning outcomes, which were set at Master's level, and some of the assessment methods used in the practice-based learning modules, which they considered did not always reach M-level. For example, in Occupational Therapy in Practice 1 the summative assessment takes the form of a portfolio. It was not clear to the visitors how this differed from the portfolio required from learners on the undergraduate programme, and so they could not be clear that it was an appropriate way of measuring M-level learning outcomes. They therefore require the education provider to show how they will ensure that all the assessment methods used on the programme are appropriate to measure M-level learning outcomes.

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 29 January 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](#).

