
Approval process report

University of Worcester, Occupational Therapy (Degree Apprenticeship)
2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve an occupational therapy programme at the University of Worcester. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found most of our standards were met in this area. There were seven areas we needed to explore further through stage 2 of the approval process.
- Reviewed the programme against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme should be approved.
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme(s) is approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - Quality activity one: The visitors understood this was the first degree apprenticeship programme for the allied health professions offered by the education provider. The visitors were unable to confirm what resources were readily available to the programme leaders and which could be used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. The education provider informed us the programme leaders attend regular Course Leader meetings which provided peer support and are used to circulate information. They also explained programme leaders attend professional body apprenticeship network meetings and events to develop professional peer support networks. We were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how programme leaders were supported.
 - Quality activity two: The visitors noted the Placement Unit at the education provider provided support to employers and recognised the initial small cohort number. The visitors were unsure how employers, who may be smaller organisations with limited practice experiences available, manage to provide the required breadth of experiences necessary for learners to meet the SOPs. The education provider informed us during the recruitment and selection process discussions are held with the employer about their capacity to support a learner. Quarterly Individual Learner Progress Reviews (ILPRs) between education provider, learner, and employer, are
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used to discuss practice-based learning. We were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how employers will ensure learners provide the breadth of experiences for learners to meet the SOPs.

- The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore is approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval process was not referred from another process.
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Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether the programme is approved
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Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider's next performance review will be in the 2027-28 academic year.
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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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.

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme(s) detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme(s) approval / ongoing approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which 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.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:

- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)

- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

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 design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the 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 takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Jo Jackson	Lead visitor, physiotherapy
Joanne Stead	Lead visitor, occupational therapy
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers eight HCPC-approved programmes across five professions plus one prescribing programme. It is a higher education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2013.

The proposed programme sits within the School of Health and Wellbeing. Most HCPC-approved programmes also sit within this School. V300 Non-Medical (Independent and Supplementary) Prescribing Programme sits in the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

We considered a new BSc (Hons) Nutrition and Dietetics, full time programme through the approval process in 2024. This was approved at the June 2024 Education and Training Panel (ETP) and started in September 2024.

Alongside the current approval for the proposed occupational therapy degree apprenticeship programme in this report, the education provider is also seeking approval for additional degree apprenticeship programmes in paramedics, physiotherapy, and dietetics. The degree apprenticeship provision is being assessed separately due to significant differences between the documentary submission dates, programme start dates, and the site of delivery which impacted policies applicable to the paramedic provision. These are the first degree apprenticeship programmes the education provider has sought approval for.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Dietitian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2024
	Occupational therapy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2013
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2017
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2013
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2023
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2014

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk-based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	672	702	2024	<p>The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>We reviewed the information submitted by the education provider and were satisfied the resources provided are effective for the delivery of the programme.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	3%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's</p>

				<p>performance has improved by 1%.</p> <p>We reviewed learner's experience on approved programmes and any potential factors for not continuing. We were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>
<p>Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study</p>	93%	92%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 5%.</p> <p>We reviewed learner's experience on approved programmes and any potential for progression. We were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>
<p>Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award</p>	N/A	Silver	2023	<p>The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education."</p> <p>We reviewed learner's experience on approved programmes and any potential for progression. We</p>

				were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
Learner satisfaction	79.5%	84.9%	2024	<p>This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 12.3%.</p> <p>We reviewed the learner experience at the education provider and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.</p>
HCPC performance review cycle length	n/a	2027-28	2022-23	The education provider's next performance review is 2027-28. This decision was made in 2022-23 and represents the maximum period an education provider can be given through the performance review process.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Information for applicants –**
 - Application processes are shared between the employer and the education provider. Applicants provide a personal statement and references which are reviewed to assure they are of good character. The employer shortlists the candidates they wish to put forward. The education provider supports employers with this to ensure the applicant meets the entry requirements and apprenticeship funding eligibility. Shortlisted applicants attend an interview with an academic and the employer. Applicants' previous experience and suitability for the apprenticeship is assessed through completion of an Initial Needs Assessment (INA) against the apprenticeship knowledge, skills, and behaviour requirements. Applicants' understanding of attributes, values, and behaviours related to professionalism is assessed. This supports the assessment of the learner's suitability to undertake an apprenticeship programme.
 - Employers are supported to understand the funding rules via the education provider's Employer Apprentice Funding Guide. The recruitment timeline is contained in the Recruitment and Selection Process timetable.
 - The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. The proposed programme represents a new model of learning for the education provider. Employers are supported via the education provider's Employer Apprentice Funding Guide. Application processes are shared between the employer and the education provider. Applicants' previous experience and suitability for the apprenticeship is assessed through completion of an Initial Needs Assessment (INA). As these are new, we will need to consider the information for applicants as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
 - The relevant entry requirements are available on the education providers website and in the programme specification. The admissions policy also outlines the English language, character, and health requirements. To meet the requirements, applicants are required to provide evidence of the level of their English language, at a minimum of GCSE grade 4, as part of the application process.
 - Applicants are required to have enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) clearance. This is arranged by the employer for applicants accepting an offer for a place. References are reviewed for each applicant to assure good character. All shortlisted applicants are assessed of their understanding of attributes, values, and behaviours related to professionalism. The employer confirms to the education

provider the DBS check has been completed and provides the DBS registration number.

- Applicants are also required to satisfy the education provider's health requirements and have occupational health clearance. The employer arranges for the learner to complete this. The employer confirms to the education provider the OH check has been completed.
- Applicants complete an INA. This includes a baseline assessment of English language and Mathematics. The apprenticeship agreement is completed with the employer and learner. This confirms the apprenticeship standard, start and end dates, and the amount of off the job training the learner will receive.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
 - Applicants may apply for consideration of recognition of prior learning. These are considered on an individual basis and scrutinised internally by two assessors and externally by the external examiner. Successful applications are recorded through the learning, teaching and quality enhancement and registry services and reported via the education provider's governance system.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
 - No applicant is subject to discrimination on grounds such as race, gender, age, sexuality, parental status, marital status, and disability status. Recruitment of staff and applicants is subject to the Equality and Diversity Policy.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. The proposed programme represents a new model of learning for the education provider. Employers are supported via the education provider's Employer Apprentice Funding Guide. Application processes are shared between the employer and the education provider. Applicants' previous experience and suitability for the apprenticeship is assessed through completion of an INA. As these are new, we will need to consider the information for applicants (SET 2.1) as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ –**
 - Programmes are subject to the requirements of the education provider's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework and Assessment Policy which meets the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK quality code for higher education. The education provider delivers education across a range of professions.
 - An external examiner is appointed to provide an external overview of academic and professional standards.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
 - The education provider established partnerships with local NHS Trusts and private / voluntary organisations within their integrated care system. The education provider reviews resourcing to ensure there are appropriate resources for programme delivery.
 - The education provider has an annual budget process and performance against this budget is monitored monthly, with any changes from the original budget updated in the full year forecast. These processes capture additional resource or capital investment requirements and consider any increase in learner numbers.
 - The education provider has an apprenticeship strategy which has run since 2023. It supports the education provider's core strategic commitments. These include the aim to increase the number of learners studying with the education provider, particularly in professions with national employment shortages. For example, nursing, allied healthcare, and education.
 - The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. They have an apprenticeship strategy which supports their core strategic commitments. As this is new, we will need to consider this strategy as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
 - Programmes have a programme specification which aligns with:
 - the requirements of the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework;
 - HCPC standards of education and training; and
 - the professional body curriculum framework.
 - The programme handbook contains information about how they are run.

¹ This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

- Programmes are compliant with the education provider's Annual Evaluation Reporting requirements. This enables programme teams and other departments to evaluate the programmes, to ensure quality assurance of standards is maintained, and enhancements are identified to ensure the programmes remain current. Programmes are subject to the education provider's six-yearly periodic review.
- The programme meets the education provider's requirements for the regulations for the appointment of external examiners.
- The education provider stated the learner voice is central within management and governance of programmes. Two learner and staff liaison committee meetings occur per academic year. There are various mechanisms through which learners can impact change on the curriculum, such as through the learner surveys, module evaluations, the Academic Representation Committee and programme representatives. The education provider aims to empower learners to take a leading role in enabling change, resulting in a more rounded learning experience.
- The End-Point Assessment (EPA) policy clarifies roles, responsibilities, and requirements for the management of the processes, end point assessments, external examiners, board of examiners, ratification of results, readiness checks and internal quality monitoring.
- The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. They have an EPA policy which clarifies roles, responsibilities, and requirements for the management of the processes, end point assessments, external examiners, board of examiners, ratification of results, readiness checks and internal quality monitoring. As this is new, we will need to consider this policy as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
 - The education provider operates robust staff recruitment processes. All staff are offered an induction programme and mentorship. All academic staff new to teaching are supported to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The education provider has a substantial staff development and training programme. This is in accordance with the staff development policy.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
 - The education provider has effective partnerships with local NHS Trusts and voluntary and independent sector healthcare provision.
 - The education provider works with practice-based learning partners to ensure the requirements of the policy for management of practice-based learning and work-based learning are met. This includes risk assessment, health and safety, and auditing to assure there are

learning opportunities and quality of the learner experience is maintained.

- The programme teams meet regularly with practice educators to review practice-based learning provision, including capacity and compliance, learner experience and outcomes. The Head of School meets regularly with allied health professions leads across NHS Trusts and the integrated care system.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. They have an apprenticeship strategy which supports their core strategic commitments. As this is new, we will need to consider this strategy as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.1.

They also have an EPA policy which clarifies roles, responsibilities, and requirements for the management of the processes, end point assessments, external examiners, board of examiners, ratification of results, readiness checks and internal quality monitoring. As this is new, we will need to consider this policy as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SETs 3.2, 3.4, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.7.

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Academic quality –**
 - Programmes are compliant with the Apprenticeship Course Planning and Approval / Re-approval Process, the Annual Evaluation Process, and Periodic Review process. Assurance of academic quality is demonstrated through benchmarking to internal and external benchmarks and apprenticeship standards for each profession and Ofsted and Education and Skills Funding Agency requirements. An external examiner is appointed to provide oversight of quality and academic standards.
 - Quality is reflected through the appointment and continuing professional development of teaching and administrative staff. Staff are required to engage with the appraisal review process annually and undertake peer-supported review of teaching for their development.
 - An Apprenticeship Sub-committee of the education provider's Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee meets and is responsible for quality oversight. The sub-committee chair and Director of Apprenticeships produce an annual self-assessment report and quality improvement plan.
 - The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. They have an Apprenticeship Course

Planning and Approval / Re-approval Process, and an Apprenticeship Sub-committee of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee. We will need to consider these processes and sub-committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**

- Programmes comply with the education provider's policy of the management of practice-based learning and work-based learning. The education provider reviews Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports and completes exceptional reporting. The education provider meets quarterly with NHS England and has the processes in place to satisfy all quality review, monitoring, and reporting requirements for the current provision.
- Learners evaluate their practice learning after each practice-based learning. These evaluations are reviewed by the programme teams, across the school and across the wider education provider to review themes and respond. Practice evaluations are shared with practice partners and summaries of the evaluations are incorporated into the practice-based learning audit.
- Where concerns are raised, processes are in place to work in collaboration with practice partners to agree and implement action plans. The education provider has implemented a process of 'speaking up.' This is to support and enable learners to raise concerns about their peers, practice colleagues or practice-based learning.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Learner involvement –**

- Learners engage in all aspects of curriculum development, delivery, and evaluation. Learners are represented at approval events to ensure their voice and learner's experience is central to the approval process. Learners are required to evaluate all modules, and module leaders' feedback to learners to 'close the loop.'
- In addition, learners are asked to take part in an annual programme experience survey or the National Student Survey (NSS) in their final year of study. Programme leaders respond to these surveys. Learner and staff liaison committees are scheduled twice a year.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Service user and carer involvement –**

- The education provider has a service user and carer group, IMPACT. Those involved in IMPACT have experience of both contemporary and historical experiences of health services. They play a key role in the

work the education provider undertakes. New programme developments involve IMPACT members in recruitment, teaching, assessment, and review.

- IMPACT is co-ordinated via a principal lecturer and dedicated administrative support. The co-ordinator arranges induction and training, consults with the range of allied health disciplines, meets regularly with the IMPACT group, and allocates work. Members are remunerated for pro-active input, such as teaching or assessment. IMPACT members are part of both admissions and staff selection processes. Involvement in learning and teaching ranges from members 'telling their stories' to offering critique on policy, theory, and practice.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. They have an Apprenticeship Course Planning and Approval / Re-approval Process, and an Apprenticeship Sub-committee of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee. We will need to consider these processes and sub-committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SET 3.4.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Support –**
 - Learners are offered a range of support services. These include:
 - Wellbeing support;
 - Careers and employability;
 - Chaplaincy;
 - Counselling and mental health;
 - Disability and dyslexia; and
 - Money advice.
 - Every learner is allocated a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). They are required to meet with their PAT a minimum of four times a year in the first year of their studies and a minimum of three times a year thereafter. Personal academic tutoring supports learners in engaging with the academic requirements and expectations of their learning, and professional and personal development.
 - Learners have a designated workplace mentor within their workplace appointed by their employer. They will provide support, advice, and guidance to the apprentice throughout the duration of the programme.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
 - Learners are subject to the education provider's Fitness to Practice Procedures, Student Disciplinary Procedures, and the Student Attendance Policy. All learners are required to confirm their good health and good character at the start of each academic year.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
 - Programmes are subject to the requirements of the College of Health, Life and Environmental Science Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) policy. This policy applies to both the School of Allied Health and Community and the Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery. Learners have timetabled sessions to learn with, about and from other professionals, learners, and academics. IDL is incorporated into curriculum development.
 - IDL takes place in different formats including case studies, simulated learning, and augmented and virtual reality. The education provider has in place a strategic lead for IPE.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) –**
 - The education provider is committed to EDI and considers it is integral to excellence in teaching and learning. In line with current education provider practices and expectations, EDI is embedded and promoted in the development of programmes. The education provider's EDI Policy Statement sets out their commitment and responsibilities about EDI. The education provider's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework 2022 - 2027 describes the themes, areas of focus, and governance of EDI from 2022 - 2027.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- **Objectivity –**
 - The education provider's Assessment Policy requires internal and external verification of assessments, one of the processes through which objectivity is assured. The programme satisfies this policy's standardisation procedures. This ensures the programme teams are familiar with, and understand, the marking standards and conventions in relation to giving feedback.
 - The education provider meets internal moderation procedures. This ensures academic standards are appropriate and consistent across programmes and subject teams and feedback reflects agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria. Therefore, the assessment outcomes are fair and dependable.
 - The education provider is responsible for external moderation. External examiners are consulted and agree a schedule for standardisation and internal and external moderation of assessments.
 - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
 - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement –**
 - Progression and achievement decisions are ratified by the board of examiners as required by the education provider's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.
 - Learners must pass a minimum of 360 credits with 120 credits at each level of the programme to be awarded the qualification.
 - There is no compensation between assessments for modules where a practical skill component exists. Learners need to achieve all elements of their programme to be eligible to apply for registration with HCPC.
 - Learners must pass the End-Point Assessment (EPA). This is the final stage of the programme and a test the learner has gained occupational competence at the end of their apprenticeship.
 - Individual learner reviews take place each quarter with the apprentice, employer, and education provider. Learners' progress and achievements are shared with employers in quarterly employer reviews undertaken by the Head of Department.
 - The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. Learners on the proposed programme must pass the EPA. As this is new, we will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- **Appeals –**
 - The programme complies with both the Student Academic Appeals Procedures and the Student Complaints Procedures. The appeals procedures define the grounds for making an appeal and describe how

they are investigated and heard. The complaints procedures define the grounds for learners to bring their dissatisfaction or concern to the attention of the education provider and how the complaint will be investigated and heard.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes. Learners on the proposed programme must pass the EPA. As this is new, we will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process. This links to SETs 6.3 and 6.4.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to clear alignment in most areas of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:

- Resources will be assessed and allocated as part of the education provider's course approval process. The resources set out in the course approval process provide roles and responsibilities for the Course lead, Head of Department, Head of School, and administration support.
- The education provider has a range of learning and teaching spaces and classrooms. This includes a simulation facility, two community houses and clinic rooms.
- Resources are in place now for the proposed programme. They will be assessed and allocated as part of the education provider's course approval process.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: There are seven areas we will need to review through stage 2 of the process. These are because the education provider does not currently run HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programmes:

- SET 2.1 – The proposed programme represents a new model of learning for the education provider. Employers are supported via the education provider's Employer Apprentice Funding Guide. Application processes are shared between the employer and the education provider. Applicants' previous experience and suitability for the apprenticeship is assessed through completion of an Initial Needs Assessment. As these are new, we will need to consider the information for applicants and employers as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

- SET 3.1 – The education provider has an apprenticeship strategy which supports their core strategic commitments. As this is new, we will need to consider this strategy as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- SETs 3.2, 3.4, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.7 – The education provider also has an EPA policy which clarifies roles, responsibilities, and requirements for the management of the processes, end point assessments, external examiners, board of examiners, ratification of results, readiness checks and internal quality monitoring. As this is new, we will need to consider this policy as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- SET 3.4 – The education provider has an Apprenticeship Course Planning and Approval / Re-approval Process, and an Apprenticeship Sub-committee of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee. We will need to consider these processes and sub-committee as part of stage 2 of the approval process.
- SETs 6.3 and 6.4 – Learners on the proposed programme must pass the EPA. As this is new, we will need to consider this as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational Therapist	15 learners, one cohort per year	08/09/2025

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

Data / intelligence considered

We also considered intelligence from others (e.g. prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:

- NHS England (Midlands) – we received information considering current pressures regarding practice-based learning but did not receive any which we considered would impact on this assessment.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

We have reported on how the provider meets standards, including the areas below, through the [Findings section](#).

Quality theme 1 – how programme leaders are supported

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the education provider had experience in delivering apprenticeship programmes. They also recognised the education provider had support processes in place, for example the Apprenticeship Office. However, the visitors understood this was the first degree apprenticeship programme for the allied health professions offered by the education provider. From the documentation, the visitors were unable to confirm what resources were readily available to the programme leaders and which could be used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. The visitors were therefore unsure what support was available in this new delivery model. Therefore, we sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us the programme leaders attend regular Course Leader meetings across the Department of Allied Health. They added these meetings provided peer support and are used to circulate information. The education provider explained programme leaders attend professional body apprenticeship network meetings and events to develop professional peer support networks. These support with programme implementation and development. The visitors were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how programme leaders were supported. They had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.

Quality theme 2 – how the education provider ensures employers can provide the required range of practice-based learning

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted that there are three employers who have committed to sending learners to study on the programme for the initial cohort. They are:

1. Gloucestershire Health and Care Trust: three learners
2. Wye Valley Trust: two learners
3. Herefordshire County Council: one learner

The visitors noted the Placement Unit at the education provider provided support to employers and recognised the initial small cohort number. However, the visitors were unsure how employers, who may be smaller organisations with limited practice experiences available, manage to provide the required breadth of experiences necessary for learners to meet the SOPs. We therefore sought more information about this.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this by requesting an email response from the education provider. We thought this was the most effective way to explore the theme as we decided it was a query to which we needed to clarify our understanding.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider informed us during the recruitment and selection process discussions are held with the employer about their capacity to support a learner. These discussions include how the employer can meet the practice-based learning requirements and provide opportunities for their learner. Quarterly Individual Learner Progress Reviews (ILPRs) between education provider, learner, and employer, are used to discuss practice-based learning. From these discussions, practice-based learning goals will be agreed, and progress reviewed at each ILPR. The visitors were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how employers will ensure learners provide the breadth of experiences for learners to meet the SOPs. They had no further questions in this area and considered the standard to be met.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that

standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
 - Employers conduct initial recruitment and ensure applicants meet entry requirements. They then apply via the education provider's employer portal, complete an INA, and upload qualifications to confirm eligibility and funding access. A collaborative interview is held between the employer, applicant, and programme team. These steps determine if the programme is suitable for the applicant's role and level and inform the decision to offer a place. The education provider provides detailed information on its website, and applicants can contact the Admissions Tutor or attend open days. The Apprenticeship Office supports both employers and applicants throughout the process. Requirements are shared at open days and with prospective employers.
 - Academic and professional entry requirements are outlined on the proposed programme's webpage. In addition, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) requirements are also published on the apprenticeship webpage once approved. Applicants must provide evidence of an enhanced DBS check and occupational health clearance. The interview process covers the role and professional responsibilities, and assesses communication, teamwork, and alignment with NHS values.
 - The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
 - The education provider has a strategy for developing and delivering higher and degree-level apprenticeships. It also has experience managing programmes that lead to professional registration.
 - Within the School of Health and Wellbeing, several apprenticeship programmes are active or in development, including social work, dietitian, physiotherapy, and paramedic (the latter three being considered separately to this case).

- The proposed programme has been developed in collaboration with stakeholders and alongside the direct entry programmes, with strong interest and commitment from employer partners and the education provider. Resources have been formally allocated, and senior management supports the proposed programme. Learners will receive the same support as direct entry learners. The programme team, senior management and the Apprenticeship Office are all involved in supporting the programme.
- The proposed programme benefits from the education provider's extensive apprenticeship experience and established management structures. The End Point Assessment (EPA) is fully integrated into the programme and is governed by the education provider's EPA Policy, which defines roles, responsibilities, and quality assurance processes. Learners must pass a gateway module before undertaking the EPA. External and internal quality monitoring ensures fairness and reliability.
- The programme contains a variety of inclusive formative and summative assessments aligned with learning outcomes and professional standards.
- Reasonable adjustments are supported via the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Internal and external moderation ensures objectivity and consistency. External examiners are appointed per the education provider's regulations and professional body standards.
- Programme evaluation and quality assurance is conducted in a variety of ways:
 - Annual Evaluation Reports (AERs) are managed continuously, with oversight by the Head of Department and Quality Co-ordinator;
 - Programme changes are managed through the CMAS committee;
 - Quarterly employer review meetings support collaboration with support from the Apprenticeship Office;
 - The Apprenticeship Sub-committee oversees planning and approval;
 - Module assessments are moderated and reviewed under the assessment policy;
 - The EPA process is monitored by external examiners, who attend boards, meet learners, and provide feedback;
 - Practice-based learning quality is audited via the Work-Based Learning Risk Assessment process;
 - Learner feedback takes place through module evaluations, and Staff Student Liaison Committees facilitate programme-wide feedback; and
 - Input from IMPACT enhances programme relevance.
- The proposed programme was developed in consultation with local employers, particularly focusing on practice-based learning. Employers are responsible for sourcing practice-based learning. The education

provider supports the employer to ensure all learners meet the practice-based learning requirements.

- Associate lecturers have been appointed. Each learner is visited by a named education provider tutor during every practice-based learning setting. Tripartite progress reviews occur every three months and quarterly employer review meetings are held by the Head of Department to maintain collaboration.
- Practice-based learning has been developed with local employers, who are responsible for sourcing them. The education provider's Practice Learning Support Team (PLAST) team provides additional support. Existing practice-based learning agreements with NHS Trusts and private, independent, and volunteering organisations (PIVO) are updated annually to include the proposed programme.
- Several permanent teaching staff participate in programme delivery. All are members of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) or will undertake relevant training. All staff are appropriately qualified and registered in their respective professions and maintain professional competence through continuous professional development. HCPC-registered professionals teach core modules in their relevant profession and across interprofessional modules. Associate and visiting lecturers from clinical practice, will contribute to the programme by providing additional teaching support. All are HCPC registered professionals.
- As discussed in [quality theme 1](#), the education provider informed us the programme leaders attend regular Course Leader meetings and professional body apprenticeship network meetings and events to gain peer support and circulate information.
- The programme teams include experienced academics and clinicians, with several members currently leading existing programmes. Staff possess a broad range of expertise in practice and research. Multi-disciplinary HCPC-registered professionals also contribute to teaching and module leadership.
- The Resource Statement confirms support for learning across all settings required for programme delivery. Timetabling is managed by a dedicated team and accessible via Blackboard Ultra, which includes tools like Ally, a tool that enhances accessibility for learners and staff. Module content and outlines are reviewed by the programme team and Heads of Department to ensure consistency and accessibility.
- The education provider has a purpose-built library, supported by experienced Subject Librarians. Librarians offer one-to-one and small group support, with online booking and a live Q&A feature. Reading lists are accessible online via the library website or Blackboard. Learning materials are available in multiple formats, with digitisation available for physical resources. Blackboard Ultra use is monitored and updated annually to ensure relevance and accessibility.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**

- The programme's learning outcomes are mapped to the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) for occupational therapists. They are also aligned with IfATE requirements. Successful completion of the programme ensures graduates meet all the required SOPs.
- Learning outcomes, across multiple modules, ensure learners meet the HCPC's standards for professional conduct, performance, and ethics. These standards are introduced in the Welcome Week, before revisiting formally in the first year. In the second year, learners evaluate professional behaviours and teamwork. While in the final year, leadership development is applied in practice-based learning modules. Learners reflect on their development through practice-based learning and on-the-job experiences, documented in ILPRs.
- The occupational therapy programme has been developed in accordance with the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) Learning and Development Standards. The programme has been developed in line with the IfATE Apprenticeship Standards for occupational therapy. The programme remains relevant to current practice in a number of ways. Visiting Lecturers and Associate Lecturers from clinical practice teach on the programme, helping to ensure the curriculum remains relevant to current practice. The programme team will meet with employers and talk with Visiting Lecturers and Associate Lecturers, to ensure that discussions about content and delivery are framed in relation to current practice. The curriculum is also based on the latest research or guidelines and so will remain relevant.
- The programme integrates academic learning with professional standards which fosters independence and reflective experience through enquiry-based learning and evidence-based practice.
- The curriculum for the programme has been developed with input from employers to meet workforce needs.
- Evidence-based learning is embedded across all modules, with dedicated first year modules introducing evidence-based practice. A second-year module focuses on research methodology and critical appraisal, with two final year modules, involving an evidence-based project to apply research in practice. The curriculum reflects the education provider's "Inspired for Life" ethos, preparing apprentices for lifelong learning and innovative, reflective practice.
- Theory and practice are integrated across all levels of the programme. This ensures continuous application of academic learning in real-world settings. Practice-based learning occurs within modules at every level. This allows learners to apply theoretical knowledge in practice-based learning settings once safe and competent. Learners are encouraged to reflect on academic learning during practice-based learning and on-the-job activities. Integration is assessed through academic and practice-based evaluations, with tripartite reviews capturing progress and development throughout the programme.

- The programme uses a diverse range of teaching and learning methods. These include classroom learning, seminars, group work, workshops, practical sessions, simulation, and practice-based learning. Learners engage with the IMPACT team, who share their lived experiences to enhance simulated practice and feedback.
- Independent study is supported by Blackboard Ultra. Formative and summative assessments are aligned with the module learning outcomes and the placement assessment documents (PADs) clearly outline expectations. Assessment tools and reflective methods are used to demonstrate learning. While mid-way and final reviews ensure continuous learning during practice-based learning.
- Reflection is embedded throughout teaching, practice-based learning, and tripartite review preparation. Learners are encouraged to connect experiences to the required Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs). Personal goal setting with line managers supports ongoing development every 12 weeks. Reflection is a core component of the PADs and the portfolio at each level.
- Evidence-based practice is a core element of the programme. It is introduced in the first year, expanded in the second year through the research module Developing the Evidence for Apprentices, and consolidated in the final year with an independent research project in module Generating the Evidence for Apprentices. Learners analyse evidence in clinical modules in the second year and apply evidence-based practice in real-world settings. They share their application of evidence with practice educators to demonstrate clinical reasoning and decision-making.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
 - Learners apply their academic learning in the workplace through ongoing reflection and discussion in ILPRs. They complete practice-based learning at each level, embedded within four modules. To progress annually, they must pass these. For the final qualification, they must demonstrate they have completed at least 1000 hours of practice-based learning as part of their EPA.
 - Practice-based learning is developed in collaboration with the existing direct entry programmes. For the occupational therapy programme, it is delivered in through four full-time blocks over three years - one in each of the first two years and two in the third year. These are embedded in professional modules to support readiness for practice. Practice-based learning requirements are outlined in the practice-based learning handbook and aligned with profession specific SOPs. As discussed in [quality theme 2](#), the education provider holds discussions with employers about their capacity to support a learner, including how they can provide opportunities for their learner.
 - Each learner is supported by a HCPC-registered practice educator who supervises their daily activities and conducts both the midway and final

assessments. A named academic tutor also meets with the learner and Placement Supervisor at least once during each practice-based learning.

- Practice educators must complete education provider training, including initial training, and refresher sessions every three years. Additional sessions can be arranged as needed. A monitored database of approved practice educators will be maintained. All practice educators involved in assessing practice-based learning must be HCPC registered.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 6: Assessment –**

- The proposed programme is mapped to the HCPC SOPs for their profession. This is to ensure graduates meet professional requirements and are eligible to register with the HCPC. Practice-based learning outcomes and assessment criteria are based on these SOPs. The programme assessments are also aligned with the IfATE Apprenticeship Standards.
- Assessment of learners' professional behaviours is embedded in multiple modules and is a core requirement of each practice-based learning opportunity. Learners are also expected to maintain professionalism in their employment. Any concerns are addressed during ILPRs and may also be raised during quarterly employer reviews with the Head of Department.
- Assessments use a variety of inclusive methods aligned with the education provider's assessment policy. These assessments measure learners' knowledge, skills, and behaviours, ensuring they meet HCPC standards and provide a fair and reliable measure of learners' progression. Reasonable adjustments are supported through the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Learners receive both formative and summative assessments, all aligned with module learning outcomes.
- Internal and external moderation ensures fairness and reliability, with external examiners overseeing assessment standards.
- The EPA process, detailed in the Apprenticeship Specification and University policy, includes a gateway module learners must pass before undertaking the EPA. The Programme Specification outlines progression requirements.
- The programme's learning outcomes are aligned with the assessment methods. Each module includes formative assessments to support learning and self-evaluation. There are also a variety of summative assessments to ensure accessibility for all learners, with details provided in the Module Specifications, Programme Specification, and Course Handbook.
- Assessment strategies follow the education provider's assessment policy, ensuring consistency and accessibility. Internal and external moderation ensures reliability and fairness.

- External examiners, who must be HCPC-registered in the relevant profession, oversee standards in line with HCPC and professional body requirements.
- The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval, focused review, or performance review process).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

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. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- All standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The programmes are approved

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that programme should receive approval.

Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on approval. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation, and the nature, quality and facilities of the provision.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
University of Worcester	CAS-01711-L7C5N7	Jo Jackson Joanne Stead	<p>Through this assessment, we have noted:</p> <p>The areas we explored focused on:</p> <p>Quality activity one: The visitors understood this was the first degree apprenticeship programme for the allied health professions offered by the education provider. The visitors were unable to confirm what resources were readily available to the programme leaders and which could be used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. The education provider informed us the programme leaders attend regular Course Leader meetings which provided peer support and are used to circulate information. They also explained programme leaders</p>	<p>Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:</p> <p>Resources will be assessed and allocated as part of the education provider's course approval process. The resources set out in the course approval process provide roles and responsibilities for the Course lead, Head of Department, Head of School, and administration support.</p> <p>The education provider has a range of learning and teaching spaces and classrooms. This includes a simulation facility, two community houses and clinic rooms.</p> <p>Resources are in place now for the proposed programme. They were</p>

			<p>attend professional body apprenticeship network meetings and events to develop professional peer support networks. We were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how programme leaders were supported.</p> <p>Quality activity two: The visitors noted the Placement Unit at the education provider provided support to employers and recognised the initial small cohort number. The visitors were unsure how employers, who may be smaller organisations with limited practice experiences available, manage to provide the required breadth of experiences necessary for learners to meet the SOPs. The education provider informed us during the recruitment and selection process discussions are held with the employer about their capacity to support a learner. Quarterly Individual Learner Progress Reviews (ILPRs) between education provider, learner, and employer, are used to discuss practice-based learning. We were satisfied the evidence demonstrated how employers will</p>	<p>assessed and allocated as part of the education provider's course approval process.</p>
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			<p>ensure learners provide the breadth of experiences for learners to meet the SOPs.</p> <p>The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.</p>	
Programmes				
Programme name			Mode of study	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy			WBL (Work based learning)	Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Nutrition and Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/09/2024
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2013
MSc (Pre-registration) Occupational Therapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Occupational therapist			01/07/2021
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2013
MSc (Pre-registration) Physiotherapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			01/07/2021
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		11/09/2023
V300 Non-Medical (Independent and Supplementary) Prescribing Programme	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/02/2014