

HCPC major change process report

Education provider	University of Sheffield
Name of programme(s)	MMedSci Speech and Language Therapy, Full time
Date submission received	18 February 2021
Case reference	CAS-16900-B0N9H5

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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 major change process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programmes 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).

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process report. 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:

Elsbeth McCartney	Speech and language therapist
Lorna Povey	Speech and language therapist
John Archibald	HCPC executive

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MMedSci Speech and Language Therapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Speech and language therapist
First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 26
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	MC04842

We undertook this assessment to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards, following changes reported to us via the major change process. The following is an overview of the changes from the information received via this process.

The education provider has informed us they intend to establish an additional part time route. This programme will use the existing infrastructure of the full time programme, but learners will complete it at a slower pace and with more flexibility over three academic years. The education provider has confirmed the part time programme follows the full time programme in terms of content and overall design. The processes and procedures already approved on the full time programme, will map on to the part time programme in the same way.

The education provider aims to recruit a maximum of five learners to the part-time programme. They aim to grow the part-time programme to a maximum of ten learners over the next five years. The part time programme will have a dedicated programme lead who will work alongside the programme lead for the full time MMedSci.

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
Major change notification form	Yes
Completed major change standards mapping	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission, the visitors were not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that our standards continued to be met at this time, and therefore require further evidence as noted below.

Further evidence required

In order to determine whether the standards continue to be met, the visitors require further evidence for the following standards for the reasons noted below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programme(s), and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the standards.

2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that the new MMedSci programme is hoping to attract learners who want to study part-time. The visitors were aware that learners could therefore study whilst potentially continuing with other activities including employment. The visitors considered that to be able to make this choice, potential applicants need to

know the pattern of study across the three years of the programme, in terms of dates, days and the hours during which attendance could be required. The visitors were unable to find this information in the documentation provided. The visitors also saw that in section 4 of appendix F, the number of weeks does not add up to the total given, and where they appear in the calendar is not stated.

The visitors therefore consider the information provided as part of the admissions process is not clear, and so does not allow for informed decision-making. The visitors need further information about the pattern of study, including consistent information about the number of weeks, across the programme so applicants have all the information that they need to make a fully informed decision about taking up a place on a programme.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further evidence of the timetable for the three years of the part time MMedSci programme, giving calendar weeks, days within these weeks and the hours in the day during which university attendance may be required.

5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.

Reason: The visitors noted that the new MMedSci programme is hoping to attract learners who want to study part-time. The visitors were aware that learners could therefore study whilst potentially continuing with other activities including employment. The visitors considered that to be able to make this choice, potential applicants need to know the pattern of study across the three years of the programme, in terms of dates, days and the hours during which attendance could be required, including periods in practice-based learning. The visitors were unable to find this information in the documentation presented. In section 4 of appendix F, the visitors saw the number of placement sessions given but they were not clear where they appear in the calendar.

The visitors therefore considered that learners and practice educators are not fully informed about the expectations regarding practice-based learning. The visitors need to see further evidence of the timetable for the three years of the part time MMedSci programme, showing when practice-based learning sessions are held, giving calendar weeks, days within these weeks and the hours in the day during which attendance on placement may be required.

Suggested evidence: The education provider needs to provide further evidence of the timetable for the three years of the part time MMedSci programme, showing when practice-based learning sessions are held, giving calendar weeks, days within these weeks and the hours in the day during which attendance on placement may be required.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the request for further evidence set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the standards continue to be met and recommend that the programme(s) remain approved.

- not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the standards continue to be met for the reason(s) noted in section 5, and recommend that an approval visit is undertaken to consider the approval of the programme(s).

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 27 April 2021 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).