

Performance review process report

Nordoff Robbins. Review Period 2021-2023

Executive summary

This is a report on our process for reviewing Nordoff Robbins's performance. It captures the process we have undertaken to consider the institution's performance in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future and to consider whether there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against quality themes and found that we needed to undertake further exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Undertaken quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed.
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - The low levels of learners responding to internal satisfaction surveys. This theme looks at survey fatigue and how the education provider is addressing this.
- The following are areas of best practice:
 - We have noted one area of best practice. This concerns the lack of a requirement to be able to read sheet music to be accepted into the programme. The education provider has discussed how this was a previous requirement, but it is no longer needed. This allows many more prospective applicants to apply for the programme. We found this to be an inclusive initiative and to help widen participation in the programme.
- The provider should next engage with monitoring in two years, the 2025-26 academic year:
 - Due to the lack of established data points. We shall work with the education provider over the next academic year to embed these and produce usable data before their next performance review.

Previous consideration	The education provider was scheduled to complete their performance review in this academic year (2023-24). This concludes the two-year ongoing monitoring period since their last review in 2021-22.
Decision	<p>The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be

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- whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how

Next steps

Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:

- Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2025-26 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 performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) 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 performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

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

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:

- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

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 a review of this education provider:

Karen Diamond	Lead visitor, Arts therapist
Rosie Axon	Lead visitor, Arts therapist
Sarah Hamilton	Service User Expert Advisor
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer
Jennifer French	Advisory visitor, Arts therapist

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. The performance review process does not always require profession level scrutiny which requires all professionals to be represented in the assessment panel. Rather, the process considers how the education provider has performed at institution level, linked to the themes defined in section 1. Lead visitors have the option to appoint additional advisory partners where this will benefit the assessment, and / or where they are not able to make judgements based on their own professional knowledge.

In this assessment, we considered we did not require additional professional expertise across all professional areas delivered by the education provider. We considered this because the lead visitors were satisfied they could assess performance and risk without needing to consider professional areas outside of their own and the support visitors expertise.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 1 HCPC-approved programme across 1 profession. It is a private provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes continually since 1995. They previously had 3 further music therapy programmes. The current programme started in 2014 upon the planned transfer of validation from City University, London to Goldsmiths, University of London – a move approved as a major change by the HCPC. The education provider engaged with the Performance Review (PR) process in the current model of quality assurance in 2021.

The education provider engaged with the major change process in the legacy model of quality assurance to report changes in 2019. The changes related to the Master of Music Therapy (Nordoff Robbins): Music, Health, Society, full time programme. The education provider intended to introduce a third teaching base for the programme, in Newcastle. At the time, the programme was approved to be delivered simultaneously in Manchester and London, with the management of the programme based in London. They were not making changes to the delivery of the curriculum or assessment of the programme. They intended to deliver the programme in Newcastle, in the same way as delivered in Manchester and London. After considering the education provider's response to the conditions set, we were satisfied that the conditions were met, and the programme remain approved in 2019.

The education provider engaged with the annual monitoring assessment process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2020.

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	Arts therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2014

The education provider only offers programmes / training that leads to registration as Arts Therapists (Music).

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 programmes¹.

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Numbers of learners	36	12	2022-23	<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 was presented by the education provider through this submission.</p> <p>The education provider is recruiting learners below the benchmark. This is something the visitors were made aware of this ahead of their assessment and factored this in to their findings.</p> <p>The education provider informed us that, as this is a two-year programme with staggered entries at different</p>

¹ An explanation of the data we use, and how we use this data, is available [here](#)

				<p>geographical bases, the total number of learners will never tally with the number of learners who are about to graduate or the number of new recruits at any single point. Their maximum capacity at any one time is 40 learners. This is broken down to 15 learners in their London base, 15 learners in their Manchester base, and 10 in learners in their Newcastle base.</p> <p>The value of 12 is the number of incoming learners for the 2022-2024 cohort based in London. Their overlapping 2021-2023 cohort (located across Manchester and Newcastle) included 23 learners, giving a total of 35 learners for the academic year 2022-2023. This is within range of the benchmark number.</p>
Learner non continuation	3%	N/A	2020-21	There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data reporting for this and other data points through this performance review assessment.
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	93%	N/A	2020-21	There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data reporting for this and other data points through this performance review assessment.
Learner satisfaction	N/A	N/A	2023	There is no data available for this data point. We asked the education provider to consider if they wanted to establish ongoing data

				reporting for this and other data points through this performance review assessment.
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Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the [thematic areas reviewed](#) section of this report.

The education provider’s self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. 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 was performing well against our standards.

Quality theme 1 – Falling completion by learners of internal surveys.

Area for further exploration: We noted from the education providers' submission that they regularly run their own internal surveys for learners. These are used to inform on learners’ satisfaction and factors into their future planning. However, we note that only 25% of learners complete the feedback surveys. This may be due to survey fatigue. This brings into question the validity of the survey. A robust mechanism must be in place for learners to feedback on the programme. We therefore opted to explore this further to determine what the education provider is doing to increase learner engagement. What actions are / have been taken as a result of the recent surveys, how often are they surveyed, and what plans to address this?

Quality activities agreed to explore the theme further: We opted to explore this further, allowing the education provider to respond with a further narrative explanation. We found this the best way to respond as they can detail in their own words how they plan to address this.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provided responded with a narrative response. Here, they acknowledged the problems they have encountered with falling learner response rates. They discussed how, in previous years, they used a

timetabled seminar to administer the survey, encouraging learners to complete it (online anonymously via Google Forms) before leaving the room. This produces a much higher return of surveys.

However, learners felt this wasn't the best use of precious time together at the end of the programme because they could just as easily fill in the feedback form in their own time. Therefore, they tried simply sending learners the link to the survey and asking them to complete it in their own time. The education provider reflected that the result of this was a much lower return rate as detailed. This clearly hasn't worked.

In addition, the End-of-Programme survey in 2023 they noted was the longest survey they had asked learners to complete as they were seeking to follow HCPC advice on incorporating items from the NSS for comparison purposes. They found NSS items to be generally low in relevance to their learners, which is also likely to have been a factor in many people not completing the survey.

In summer 2024 they will return to administering the End-of-Programme survey in timetabled time, and are confident this will result in a higher return rate.

The visitors satisfied that the return to administering the End-of-Programme survey in timetabled time, should result in a higher return rate. The extensive checklist of actions and plans provided is very reassuring and the assessors are confident that feedback is valued on the course.

Section 4: Findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
 - The education provider has discussed how they are a music therapy-specific charity with three key aspects to their activities. These are the delivery of music therapy services, education and research. As an institution, they consider these to be connected and to inform and shape each other.
 - They discussed their policy of maintaining reserves of funds. This, means that in the unlikely event of them experiencing financial difficulties, there would always be sufficient funding to see all current learners through to completion of their training without any ill effects. This is required by as part of their validation agreement with Goldsmiths, University of London.

- They have discussed how, as a charity, they operate a very different business model than other HEIs. Their primary income comes from various fundraising activities from across the music industry. This includes the British Record Industry Trust (BRIT Trust), whose fundraising partially supports the education provider. This is supplemented by income from their Partner Organisations. These are organisations within which their employed therapists provide music therapy at a subsidised rate) and fees from their master's degree in music therapy (MMT) and PhD learners.
- The education provider has discussed the impact the Covid-19 pandemic's had on them. Their board of trustees released funds from their reserves to support them which enabled them to continue to grow as an institution. They have also stated that the MMT programme is significantly subsidised by the organisation (to keep fees as low as possible) and that their finances have now recovered from the hit to fundraising caused by the pandemic.
- The visitors noted the education providers reflections in this area. They noted how the education provider has drawn on their financial reserves, but post-pandemic, their funding has recovered, so there are no issues around the programme viability. The visitors are satisfied with their performance and find them to be performing satisfactorily.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - The education provider has discussed how they are a member of an international grouping of music therapy organisations. These organisations teach, practise and research the 'Nordoff Robbins approach' to music therapy under the term 'Nordoff Robbins International'. They state they regularly engage with colleagues across multiple countries, including the USA, Germany and Poland. This, they state, presents opportunities for them to learn from each other via online Continuing Professional Development (CPD) seminars. These opportunities are also opened up to their learners and valued by them.
 - The education provider has discussed how they primarily deliver music therapy within other organisations they refer to as their 'partner organisations'. The education provider currently has 120 permanently employed therapists working across 264 Partner Organisations and in their music therapy centres. These Partner Organisations cover a wide range of contexts, including education (mainstream and specialist schools), the health sector (including NHS Trusts and Boards), and the care sector (primarily privately run care homes).
 - The education provider has discussed their primary external relationship with Goldsmiths, University of London (Goldsmiths), who validate their MMT and PhD programmes. As their validator, Goldsmiths reports to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) on their behalf. At Goldsmiths, they work closely with the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies (STaCS). Their validation was renewed in 2020 for a further five years.
 - The education provider has discussed how their colleagues engage with them both as an art therapy education provider and as a hub for music therapy research. They referred to this arrangement as a "validation plus" and is seen as innovative, underpinned by mutual

respect and recognition of potential synergies between the two organisations.

- The education provider also discussed the partnerships they have in place with the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester and Newcastle University. Here, they contribute to RNCM teaching on music and health, and from 2023-2024, they have extended this relationship into a partnership, working to develop an elective module available to all RNCM Master's level learners. In Newcastle, they contribute to the 'Community Music' module for undergraduates and host placements for learners in the Music Enterprise programme. They utilise the department's facilities for the MMT programme's Intensive Weekends. They discuss this collaboration underpinned by a non-financial Memorandum of Understanding.
- The visitors found comprehensive reflections on the various partnerships across the three sites and links to the main institution and professional body. They are satisfied with their performance and find the education provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Academic quality –**
 - The education provider has discussed their commitment to maintaining and improving the academic quality of their MMT training programme. They reflected on how the internal assurance of this provided in the form of the work of their Director of Music Services who also leads on their institutional relationship with Goldsmiths.
 - They explained how this is helped by the nature of the education provider's focus on research. This leads to continued development and so-called 'research in action'. Externally, their validation arrangements with Goldsmiths are key to ensuring they deliver the MMT programme to the appropriate academic levels. Goldsmiths' appointment of an External Examiner (EE) and an Academic Link ensures regular external feedback on the academic quality, learner's work, and marking.
 - Additionally, they have discussed how samples of assignments are sent to the External Examiner for moderation and feedback. The external examiner also has to approve all failed assignments. At the end of each academic year, an External Examiner's report is written and shared with the Board of Examiners and then distributed to tutors and learners. It is tabled for discussion at the termly Nordoff Robbins-Goldsmiths Programmes Committee meetings and at the Annual Validation Partnership review. The education provider also discussed how they have recently (2022-23) changed their EE, and their new EE focuses on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
 - Through clarification the education provider described how they have responded to the feedback from the education provider on the rigour of data analysis. They have made a deliberate choice they state, to meet the research-related requirements of the SOPs via enabling learners to handle music therapy-related data for themselves, rather than simply learning about research.
 - The visitors were satisfied that the programme has implemented other methods to help learners. This includes the use of other books, introducing research methods earlier and utilising the skills of other researchers who teach on the programme. They are satisfied with the

education providers' performance in this area, finding them to be performing satisfactorily.

- **Placement quality –**

- The education provider has stated that they have a well-defined and well-rehearsed set of mechanisms for identifying, setting up, delivering, monitoring, liaising with and seeking feedback from placements. They say this is differentiated across the three placements that each learner undertakes.
- They seek to do this collaboratively with learners wherever possible and expect greater involvement from learners in the setting-up process as they progress through the programme. This serves as an opportunity for them to demonstrate the SOPs. They also tailor their portfolio to the needs of particular learners so that identified individual learning needs can be addressed effectively via practice-based learning.
- The education provider discussed how during the review period they have used their existing monitoring mechanisms. But have noted three distinct areas of concern.
 - The education provider uses Ofsted/CQC reports in placement planning to ensure a rich and safe learner experience. If a site receives an unsatisfactory report, they assess the reasons rather than automatically rejecting it. They avoid placements with safeguarding or safety concerns. This evaluation occurs before and during pre-placement visits and is monitored throughout the placement via supervision.
 - Learners are increasingly interested in unconventional organizations outside traditional sectors. In such placements, responsibility for user safety may be unclear. The education provider carefully evaluates these sites' capacity to support learners through pre-placement visits.
 - In 2021-2022, repeated COVID outbreaks in care homes disrupted some learners' experiences, leading to the relocation of two learners to placements offering significantly more experience.
- The education provider detailed their mechanisms for monitoring unconventional placements. This involves a three-way relationship between the institution, placement site, and learner, with information primarily transferred through supervision and regular supervisor contact.
- Following this expansion in information, the visitors were satisfied with the thorough response. They found the education provider to have clearly have steps in place to monitor the placements. The visitors are satisfied with the education providers' performance in this area, finding them to be performing satisfactorily.

- **Interprofessional education –**

- The education provider has discussed the challenges associated with interprofessional education (IPE). They have one approved programme, so do not have existing mechanisms in place to facilitate IPE internally.

- In terms of developments, the education provider has collaborated with STaCS at Goldsmiths to develop shared learning experiences for music therapy and art therapy learners. This was initially offered online, but physical sessions were introduced in 2022-2023. In 2023-2024, art therapy students will join the music therapy learners for an 'Intensive Weekend'. They also received feedback from their last performance review, leading to the trial of collaborations with mental health nursing programmes in 2023-2024. This will provide local opportunities for all students, regardless of their training base.
- The education provider also invites professionals from various fields to teach seminars. These are followed by debriefs with programme tutors to discuss learnings. The organisation also encourages learners to reflect on their interdisciplinary experiences in regular "Pause for Thought" sessions. These developments aim to help learners understand the benefits of learning alongside learners from other disciplines and to consider their own emergent professional identity as music therapists. They plan to review these initiatives at the end of 2023-2024 and make plans for 2024-2025 based on learner feedback and evaluation.
- The visitors welcomed the education provider's approach to reviewing feedback regarding the collaboration with mental health nursing. They found it positive to see they had identified the challenges and provided details of the developments. They are satisfied with their performance and find the education provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - The education provider has reflected that their approach to music therapy emphasizes a collaborative relationship between the therapist and the service user, with the latter at the centre of all activities. In 2021, they introduced the 'Client Involvement' initiative, aiming to involve service users in shaping their services and creating a sense of community. This initiative impacts their training and offers opportunities for service users to share their experiences with learners.
 - Service user and carer contributions are integral to the programme, and measures are in place to ensure their safety and support. The education provider is mindful of potential risks and takes steps to prevent situations that may cause anxiety or raise safeguarding concerns. Presenters are compensated with a professional sessional fee.
 - The advent of 'Zoom' has facilitated remote presentations, allowing the same input to be available to learners at all three bases. The education provider maintains an internal register of service user and carer contributions to teaching, ensuring equitable benefits for all learners and adherence to the Service User Involvement policy.
 - Feedback is gathered from both the guest presenter and the learners. This feedback indicates that learners highly value these sessions for the unique experiences they offer. They also encourage learners to engage with similar initiatives at their placement organisations. This forms part of the learners' task for their Final Presentations for Assessment of Practice.

- Through clarification, the education provider detailed how they work to be an organisation cultivating its self-awareness in order to centre service users and carers. They are working to make their institution more accessible by removing barriers, including barriers in communication methods, to becoming a service user. They ensure they have fair practices free from discrimination. They are working to instil a culture of continual listening, evolving, and learning from peoples' lived experiences, including their clients, their families and their colleagues and learners.
- The visitors found this to be a really thorough response and are satisfied that the recruitment and contact with Service Users is in place. They also welcomed the future development of planning to gain service users' perspectives on specific aspects of the teaching. The visitors are satisfied with their performance and find the education provider to be performing well in this area."
- **Equality and diversity –**
 - "The education provider has reflected on the recent British Association of Music Therapy (BAMT) diversity report (2020), which highlights the inherent lack of diversity in music therapy in general. This, they reflect, is a challenge compounded by systemic issues in therapy professions and declining opportunities for children to access sustained music education. The requirement of a master's level degree, which historically necessitated an undergraduate degree, further impacts the diversity of applications.
 - The education provider reflected on how they recognize the need to engage sensitively and critically with issues of equality and diversity. They aim to challenge learners to consider how their interactions might be perceived differently by the people they work with based on their life experiences, opportunities, and difficulties. These issues are often discussed in 'Pause for Thought' sessions as a means to navigate these challenges.
 - The education provider has discussed how they are working to combat these challenges. In 2020, they established an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) task force to address equality and diversity within the organization and on the programme. The task force was formed in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and the BAMT diversity report of 2020. It includes a learner representative from the programme and changes its membership annually. The task force debates issues, seeks expert advice, consults the wider staff team, and makes recommendations for action.
 - The admissions process also considers equality and diversity. Each applicant completes an anonymous diversity monitoring form, and the education provider reports to the Board of Trustees with information about monitoring diversity in the application process. Applicants are encouraged from all walks of life and musical trajectories, and it is explicitly stated that applicants do not need to be classically trained, able to read music, or have taken any music "grade" exams.
 - The education provider also stated in their 2022-2023 report that their external examiner was particularly impressed with the centrality of equality and diversity considerations in some of the learner viva

presentations (2021-2023 cohort). They were impressed by the prominence of ethical thinking and awareness in all learner viva presentations during this time period.

- The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area, finding them to be performing well."
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The education provider has discussed how their long-term goal is to remain a music therapy-specific organisation, contributing to the UK music therapy scene by offering distinctive and accessible training in their own style. The MMT programme plays a significant role in this aspiration and needs to be forward-looking. A thorough review of the programme is planned before its revalidation in 2025 in partnership with colleagues at Goldsmiths and other stakeholders.
 - The education provider has discussed the potential issue of the perception that progression through the Graduate Employment Scheme (GES) is semi-automatic, which could lead to feelings of failure for those not employed. The workings of the GES are separate from the training programme, and efforts are being made to ensure this separation is clear. This is currently under review by their People and Culture team.
 - In the academic year 2023-2024, a resource will be produced to collate resources and thinking for students in relation to the “Music, Health, Society” aspects of the programme. The organisation is committed to musical social activism and ensuring that the curriculum considers all aspects of EDIB. Regular meetings with the BAMT TEC will continue to be a valuable resource.
 - Financially, the aim is to keep fees low and secure more fee-waiver bursaries to diversify student cohorts. The pursuit of OfS registration will continue, opening the possibility for some students to access Masters level loans. The programme’s greatest strategic weakness is its position outside an HEI, and the downgrading of validation as a mechanism. Cultivating closer relationships with other organisations in similar situations will be the key strategic focus for the next two years.
 - At the programme level, ambitions will be advanced through partnerships, including the development of a pipeline of external facilitators with lived experience.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area, finding them to be performing well."

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
 - The education provider reflected on how the revised SOPs were considered at a national tutors’ meeting in early 2022 to ensure consistent embedding across all three training bases Subsequent

tutors' meetings have considered each area of the new SOPs (as listed here) in more detail so that we could raise tutors' awareness and develop their confidence in using the new SOPs.

- They informed existing learners of the revised SOPs and delivered a session embedding these for their practice moving forward while considering the registration requirements. The 2023-2025 cohort onwards are being introduced to the new list of SOPs as part of their initial orientation and encouraged to map their own progress toward qualification against it as part of their learning journal process.
 - Their tutorial team have reworded of their SOPs mapping documents to emphasise action and application of knowledge. This aligns with their institutional approach, which values pragmatism and collaboration, expecting therapists to be proactive and responsive to service users' needs. The revised SOPs clarify this as a professional duty to learners. No specific changes were made to the programme to implement these SOPs, but the emphasis on action was highlighted to new learners and supervisors are urged to reinforce this focus during supervision, especially when a learner appears inactive or fails to apply their understanding or knowledge.
 - Through clarification, the education provider was able to detail how the programme makes good use of various platforms and software. The regular use of guest lectures ensures the broader spread of competencies. They have detailed how they have worked to centralise the service user in their processes and in the learners' learning and awareness via centralising it in the teaching. This, they say, builds into their overall approach to music therapy, with the service user being at the heart of it.
 - Following this, the visitors found the education provider to have addressed their questions. The visitors are satisfied with the education providers' performance in this area, finding them to perform well.
 - The visitors also want to recognise an area of good practice. This concerns the lack of a requirement for applicants / learners to read sheet music for entry into the programme. The education provider has discussed how this was a previous requirement, but it is no longer needed. This allows many more prospective applicants to apply for the programme. We found this to be an inclusive initiative and to help widen participation in the programme.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - "Feedback from student cohorts finishing in 2020 and 2021 revealed a preference for face-to-face learning over the use of technology for teaching and supervision during Covid-19. Despite appreciating the efforts made and achieving the SOPs and musical craft skills, students unanimously preferred in-person supervision and workshops. This preference, aligning with tutors' perceptions and the Nordoff Robbins approach's emphasis on practical skills and holistic work, led to an organizational commitment to primarily in-person training.
 - Technology is used where helpful, such as during transport strikes or when personal circumstances prevent physical attendance, ensuring continued participation without compromising quality. During the height

of the Covid-19 pandemic, learners appreciated the use of simulation for practice-based learning and software applications for musical skills development. Learners indicated that they preferred the real-life unpredictability and social complexity offered by placements.

- While online teaching was suitable for some seminars, the highly interactive nature of the learning culture, due to small cohorts, was better suited to face-to-face seminars. During Covid-19, all assessments were moved online.
 - The education provider has discussed their approach to artificial intelligence. They have discussed how Goldsmiths' Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures were revised in 2023, and as part of this revision, attention was paid to concerns around the potentially inappropriate use of AI. The education provider adopted this updated version, which now addresses the use of AI tools in academic work.
 - The policy classifies the use of AI tools to produce work presented as a student's own as academic misconduct but allows legitimate use of AI tools in some assessments with appropriate citations. They state that most learners are not engaging with AI and those who do use it as a tool to help organize, format, or revise their writing. AI use for transcribing research data is prohibited for ethical and privacy reasons. Written assignments are personal and require learners to reflect on their own experiences, making it difficult to use AI convincingly.
 - They explained how AI could potentially be used in assessments such as their WA1, which is a traditional Masters-level critical essay. They have reflected on how the preparation for this assignment emphasizes its value as a diagnostic tool that can alert the tutorial team to any academic skills needs they are unaware of and trigger appropriate support. The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area, finding them to be performing well."
- **Apprenticeships in England –**
 - The education provider has discussed how they are not engaged in any apprenticeship provision due to several reasons. This is partly due to their validating partner, Goldsmiths, who are also not involved in apprenticeship provision. They discuss that undertaking this themselves would pose considerable Quality Assurance challenges.
 - The education provider has also considered the work conducted by the Institute for Art Therapies in Education (IATE). They have developed a standard for a master-level apprenticeship curriculum for arts therapies. They reflect that their expertise lies solely in music therapy, and this multi-arts-therapies curriculum would be challenging for them. They believe in the value of a music-therapy-specific programme, as much of their teaching involves the development of musical skills and “musical thinking”. They reflected on how under an apprenticeship system, would be training other employers’ employees. This deviates from their goal of producing graduates seeking employment and providing a pool of therapists trained in the Nordoff Robbins approach for the wider sector.
 - As a charity, the education provider has reflected on how their work to make music therapy training accessible to those who might not traditionally see themselves as music therapists or for whom the cost of

training might be a barrier. They aim to keep fees as low as possible and seek external funding for bursaries, some of which are full-fee waivers, such as the Sony Music bursaries for low-income learners and partial bursaries from other sources. They support the development of apprenticeship routes into training for people already working in healthcare services but also aim to maintain accessibility for people from a background of ongoing musical work. They reflect that they remain open to the idea of an apprenticeship provision but feel that it would not be feasible for them now.

- The visitors are satisfied with the education providers' performance in this area, finding them to be performing well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: We recognise an area of good practice that follows a development in their admissions process. This concerns the lack of a requirement for applicants / learners to read sheet music for entry into the programme. The education provider has discussed how this was a previous requirement, but it is no longer needed. This allows many more prospective applicants to apply for the programme. We found this to be an inclusive initiative and to help widen participation in the programme and is a inclusive initiative that should be commended.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - The education provider has discussed how, as a music-therapy-specific education provider, the only regulatory body they maintain approval from is the HCPC.
 - Additionally,, they discussed how music therapy's professional body is the British Association of Music Therapy (BAMT). Who has a committee known as the Training and Education Committee (TEC) on which the programme leaders of all HCPC-approved programme leaders sit: the aim is to support each other and exchange information as required. The Programme Convenor of their approved programme is part of this committee, and their Director of Music Services is on their monthly forum.
 - They have reflected on the BAMT Diversity report (published in 2020), which continues to frame many conversations within the profession, particularly at professional events. This is reflected in their EDI work, and their tutors and wider colleagues participate actively in these conversations at BAMT events, including in the upcoming 2024 BAMT conference.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area finding them to be performing well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - The education provider has discussed how, in the period being reviewed as part of this case, they have not completed any significant overhaul of their curriculum. Their next revalidation is due in 2025, and this will be a trigger for them to redevelop the curriculum as far as necessary, ensuring that the programme continues to meet its objective of preparing learners fully for work in the contemporary music therapy sector. They have discussed how they are aware that BAMT will be issuing some guidance for training programmes shortly and utilise this for any future development.
 - The education provider has discussed how they worked to embed the new SOPs after their publication. They reflect that the new SOPs were not fundamentally different to how they deliver their provision currently. In this respect they found them to be broad, and they map directly onto their existing teaching, and so no changes had to be made in response to them. They also that they are highlighting them to learners as a means of navigating their progress towards fulfilment of the SOPs by the end of the programme.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area finding them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - The education provider has discussed how there has been no new guidance from BAMT during this period. The Training and Education Committee (TEC) of BAMT has been working on developing new guidance, and their Programme Convenor has played an active role in this. Once the guidance is published, they will consider how best to respond to it.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area finding them to be performing well in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**
 - The education provider discussed their vast network of Partner Organisations and management pipelines across England, Scotland, and Wales. This network allows for a wide variety of potential placement settings. They have discussed how they have established procedures for identifying, setting up, delivering, monitoring, liaising with, and obtaining feedback from these placements. These procedures vary across the three placements each learner undertakes.
 - The education provider encourages learner involvement in the setup process, which helps them demonstrate some of the SOPs. The organisation also customises its portfolio to meet individual learners' needs, ensuring effective practice-based learning.
 - The education provider has discussed how the review period has been marked as a period of time when society was recovering from the effects of the pandemic. They have been addressing the issues of

diversity in their placements over the review period. During the pandemic, many of their school-based placements remained open to learners, and these placements were the first to welcome learners back to real life. This meant that in 2020-2021 (and to a lesser extent in 2021-2022), schools were over-represented in their placement portfolio. Their team has worked hard to address this since and has now successfully returned to a good diversity of placements at any one time.

- The education provider has also discussed how they have worked over the past two years to secure feedback from placement settings about their experience of the education provider and co-ordination of placements after a learner has finished their placement in their setting. They reflect they find this challenging as many organisations prefer to liaise verbally and whilst they are happy to complete formative assessment forms for learners, once the learner has left it is harder to garner feedback on the placement. They reflect that this has yielded some positive feedback with some discrepancies between different types of setting evident in terms of expectations of liaison.
- The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area finding them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners –**
 - The education provider has stated that over the review period, no learner complaints have been made, no completion of procedure (COP) letters issued, and no issues dealt with by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
 - The education provider has a committee named the Nordoff Robbins Goldsmiths Programmes Committee (NRGPC), which holds termly meetings with learner representatives, base coordinators, the programme convenor, the director of music services, and Goldsmiths staff. The meetings cover both housekeeping and academic matters, including teaching, assessments, and placements. Feedback is sought from learners after each part of the programme, but there is concern about survey fatigue as only a quarter of learners completed the NSS equivalent survey in summer 2023.
 - They reflected on how the programme has had several reported successes, including the quality of teaching, the usefulness of supervision, praise for tutor support, and appreciation of the “Intensive Weekends”. Despite the challenges of Covid, learners appreciated the learning opportunities presented during this time, including practice-based learning activities. However, feedback also strongly indicated that in-person learning was preferable.

- There have been challenges, including mixed experiences of Personal, Musical, Development, and Support (PMDS), varied support experiences from placement supporters, and delays in receiving Goldsmith's cards. There is ongoing work to ensure that the musical teaching and curriculum take into account issues surrounding equality and diversity. An easier way for learners to sign books in and out and see book availability in all libraries has been implemented via a system called 'Libib'. This is maintained by their education administrator in tandem with their postal delivery service.
- The visitors were concerned about the low response rate for the learner satisfaction surveys 2023. We therefore chose to explore this via quality theme [one](#).
- Following this quality activity, the visitors had no further concerns finding the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Practice placement educators –**
 - The education provider has discussed how the feedback has consistently shown that the placement pack and placement supporter information they provide has been rated as “excellent” or “good” with regards to ease of use. The information given was generally marked as “appropriate,” with a few reports that there were too many documents,.
 - Communication across these academic years has been considered “excellent” or “good” (84% of respondents). In answer to the question as to whether they would host a learner again, 98% of respondents across these academic years reported “definitely” or “probably.”
 - They also discussed how they have worked in the past two years to secure feedback from placement settings about their experience of the education provider and co-ordination of placements after a learner has finished their placement in their setting.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area finding them to be performing well in this area.
- **External examiners –**
 - The education provider has discussed how the external examiners have commended the quality of teaching and support offered, as evidenced by learners’ work and their interactions with learners. Their report reflects on the progress made from 2021 to 2023, acknowledging the challenges faced. In the 2020-2021 academic year report, the External Examiner highlighted the need for further development in teaching power and diversity, improving access to facilities at their Manchester base, and addressing the loss of library access due to Covid. These issues they reflect have been addressed, including the provision of a new printer and kettle at the RNCM, and facilitating access to e-books and physical books from the central London library.
 - Following last year's external examiner report, the education team has been working to adapt their curriculum, focusing on diversity and decolonisation. This includes revising their foundation-level module and teaching materials to reflect the history and context of the approach, as well as its evolution in light of contemporary perspectives

on power and diversity. The team has also been encouraged to address diversity within student groups and tutors, dedicating more time during induction week to this issue. Changes have been made to the semantics of assessment criteria to align better with commitments to equality and diversity. Students have been encouraged to use technology in presentations to ensure a full understanding of musical interactions.

- In the 2022-2023 academic year, a new external examiner suggested a review of the rigour of data analysis and methodological considerations in research teaching. This led to a shift from traditional dissertations to smaller, more contextualised research projects, encouraging learners to approach research like music therapy. The aim is to help learners understand how qualitative approaches align with the humanistic, music-centred approach to music therapy. The external examiner praised the central discussion of equality, diversity, and power in each assessment brief. However, they noted the need for more nuanced discussions of power within institutions or relationships. A learners group will be introduced in the next academic year to address this. The team has also been given pointers on embedding the new HCPC SOPs with Professional Competencies in end-of-part assessments of practice.
- Through clarification, the education provider detailed how their move from traditional dissertations happened before the review period. But this is an example of how they have helped to lead the field towards a more consistent focus on the real-world demands of practice. Connected to this, they also teach learners about research not as something separate from practice but as a means of thinking in a “bottom-up” way that emerges from practical experience. Thus, all research teaching is centred on researching music therapy. Learners are encouraged to design and conduct research projects that emerge from their own evolving experience of music therapy practice and theory and that of the service users with whom they work.
- The visitors are satisfied with the education providers' performance in this area, finding them to be performing well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learner non continuation:**
 - The education provider has discussed allowing learners to take a break or withdraw from the programme if needed. They describe how their foundation module (part one of the programme) is intentionally designed to let learners decide whether this programme is right for them. Their publicity materials aim to convey what music therapy comprises and what the training is like. They reflect that it is not until

learners actually start the programme that they can experience the programme's intensity.

- They stated that the two most common reasons for breaks or withdrawal from the programme are unexpected personal or family circumstances and a realisation that music therapy is not right for the individual.
- The visitors are satisfied with the education providers' performance in this area, finding them to be performing well in this area.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
 - The education provider has discussed how they do not submit data to HESA. They do endeavour to track their graduates and their future progression but reflect that keeping them updated is optional.
 - The education provider reflects that it is impossible to draw any useful statistical conclusions from such small cohorts. However, it is reflected that the vast majority of their learners continue to work as music therapists. They also reflect that many of their learners do not intend to become full-time music therapists. Instead, they will make use of the skills they acquire in future opportunities, such as in voluntary work. Many, they reflect, also see music therapy as part of a portfolio musical career or undertake the training in later life when they no longer aspire to a full-time career.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area and ambition to work to develop data points before their next review. They found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Learner satisfaction:**
 - The education provider has reflected on how they do not partake in the OfS' National Student Survey (NSS) but instead conduct their own learner satisfaction surveys. These are conducted online via Google Forms and are anonymous. They reflect that these are very detailed and provide them with useful data that can be used to reflect on how the programme is running as well as how their teaching is performing. They use the insight gained to help in their future planning and assessment procedures.
 - For Summer 2023 they updated the survey to include NSS items, but have found that learners have observed that these do not adequately capture the nuance of the training programme or their experiences of the programme. Learners have feedback that it is much more generalised in nature and geared towards undergraduate degrees. These do not map directly onto the programme, as a result they will continue to ask their own more detailed items as well. They do also note the risk of survey fatigue if too many surveys / lengthier surveys are introduced, which could lead to them being less useful.
 - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area and ambition to work to develop data points before their next review. They found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
 - The education provider has discussed how they recruit up to 15 learners in London, up to 15 in Manchester and up to 10 in Newcastle (reflecting the smaller size of the premises). This, they reflect, works well in terms of the dynamics of learner groups, and they have no plans

to change this. They discuss that any changes would first need to be approved by Goldsmiths as their validating partner.

- The visitors are satisfied with the education providers performance in this area and ambition to work to develop data points before their next review. They found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.

Proposal for supplying data points to the HCPC: The education provider has stated that would be happy to comply with any system suggested by the HCPC for supplying data. They are willing to upload data on a yearly basis, or to submit data to a suggested third party for scrutiny. Progression and retention data could be validated by Goldsmiths (since it is also recorded by their Registry). This is already a matter discussed by the two parties at their annual partnership review.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: We shall work with the education provider over the next academic year to develop data point usable / available for their next performance review.

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

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

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

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

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year

Reason for next engagement recommendation

- Internal stakeholder engagement
 - The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider were learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations, and external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
 - The education provider engaged with their sole professional body. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision.
 - The education provider did not engage with other relevant professionals or system regulators (e.g. NMC, OfS).
 - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply:

- Through the review, the education provider has not established how they will supply quality and performance data points which are equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations. Where data is not regularly supplied, we need to understand risks by engaging with the education provider on a frequent basis (a maximum of once every two years).
- The education provider is open and willing to work with the HCPC in accordance with our guidance on establishing data points. This data will then be available to be used at their next performance review (2025-26).
- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a 2-year monitoring period is:
 - Due to the lack of established data points. As detailed above we shall work with the education provider to develop the required data. This data will then be available to be used at their next performance review (2025-26).

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 education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year.

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period for the reasons noted in the report. The education provider will next engage with the performance review process in the timeframe stated in the report.

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 the next steps for the provider. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation (including their reasons) and any referrals.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Review period recommendation	Reason for recommendation	Referrals
Nordoff Robbins	CAS-01366-R1Q1W3	Karen Diamon Rosie Axon	Two years	<p>In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a 2-year monitoring period is:</p> <p>Due to the lack of established data points. As detailed above we shall work with the education provider to develop the required data. This data will then be available to be used at their next performance review (2025-26).</p>	N/A

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
Master of Music Therapy (Nordoff Robbins): Music, Health, Society	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Music therapy		01/09/2014