
Performance review process report

University of Westminster, Review Period 2018-2023

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of the University of Westminster. This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution 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 if 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
- Decided when the institution should next be reviewed

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - The education provider outlined how their programmes had seen 'a significant increase' in learner numbers in recent years. They outlined the learner numbers for the apprenticeship programme had increased from eleven learners recruited in 2020-21 to 45 learners recruited in 2023-24. The visitors noted the education provider considered the opportunities and challenges of increasing cohort sizes. To address the impact of this, we were informed the education provider explored the expansion of practical learning spaces. Through a quality activity we were satisfied with the education provider's reflections and plans for the physical resources and spaces for learners.
 - The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
 - The education provider considered learners and employers to be service users and carers respectively. This was because they had a responsibility towards their learners in terms of supporting their studies making them de facto 'carers'. Learners' exposure to patients and their carers came predominantly in their work role and in the on-the-job training. The introduction to and involvement of patients at level 6 was designed to augment and formalise that exposure. Patients did not formally feed into programme development. The education provider welcomed informal feedback from patients on their sessions with learners. The education provider had not received any feedback from patients which had warranted changes to the programme. However, the visitors considered as the
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education provider considered the learners on the programme to be service users, there was a potential risk to the performance of the programme in terms of how it continued to demonstrate the HCPC standards. They therefore considered the education provider should reflect on their performance in this area, how patients and other individuals or groups who use, benefit from or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us, contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programmes through the focused review process.

- The provider must next engage with monitoring in five years, the 2028-29 academic year, because:
 - The education provider engaged 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.
 - The education provider engaged with a number of professional bodies and regulators, and considered their findings in improving their provision.
 - Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period.
 - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This performance review 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">• when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be
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Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2028-29 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:

Emmanuel Babafemi	Lead visitor, Biomedical scientist
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Julie Weir	Lead visitor, Operating department practitioner
Sarah Hamilton	Service User Expert Advisor
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer
Robert Keeble	Advisory visitor, Biomedical scientist

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers two HCPC-approved programmes across one profession. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2007. The education provider's provision sits within the School of Life Sciences.

The education provider has not engaged with processes so far in the current model of quality assurance.

The education provider engaged with the annual monitoring process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2019. All programmes subject to this annual monitoring had their approval reconfirmed.

The education provider engaged with the major change process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2019. We undertook the assessment via the major change process when they reported they had developed a new degree apprenticeship route. The new programme delivered the same curriculum as the part time, already approved, programme. The education provider added an end point assessment to the programme to meet the requirements of a degree apprenticeship, and they made other changes to the delivery of the programme. After considering the education provider's documentary submission, the Education and Training Committee in 2020 agreed the programmes were approved.

All learners on these programmes are in full-time employment, in the NHS or private pathology laboratories. Most practice-based learning, of both programmes, takes place in the employer's laboratory. Learners also undertake practice training within the education provider's laboratories.

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
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Pre-registration	Biomedical scientist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2007
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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	55	30	2023-24	<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.</p> <p>The education provider explained the figure for the number of learners is for academic year 2021-22. They added the figures for academic year 2022-23 or 2023-24 are not yet available.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were</p>

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

				satisfied with the education provider's reflection.
Learner non continuation	3%	2%	2020-21	<p>This Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 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 education provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has been maintained.</p> <p>We did not explore this as the education provider has performed above sector norms.</p>
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	93%	92%	2020-21	<p>This HESA data was sourced from summary data. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</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 been maintained.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were</p>

				satisfied with the education provider's reflection.
Learner satisfaction	77.1%	70.1%	2023	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for 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 1.5%.</p> <p>The visitors considered the education provider's performance here and were satisfied with the education provider's reflection.</p>

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 – reflections on plans for physical resources and spaces for learners

Area for further exploration: The education provider outlined how their programmes had seen ‘a significant increase’ in learner numbers in recent years. They outlined the learner numbers for the apprenticeship programme had increased from eleven learners recruited in 2020-21 to 45 learners recruited in 2023-24. The visitors noted the education provider considered the opportunities and challenges of increasing cohort sizes. To address the impact of this, we were informed the education provider explored the expansion of practical learning spaces. However, the visitors were unsure about the education provider’s plans for the physical resources and spaces for learners. They 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 reflected they had continued to provide high quality provision and facilities for their learners. They added the programmes are two of the smaller programmes within the education provider. The education provider said the programme had a variety of teaching rooms that can house groups of 30 to 380. The education provider explained they invested in refurbishing existing specialist laboratory space and built a new 84-seat laboratory. They had also approved the budget to build and equip a 90-seat teaching laboratory, which will begin construction in May 2024.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence assured them the education provider had reflected upon the increase in learner number and undertaken work regarding physical resources and spaces for learners. We had no further areas to explore in this theme.

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 outlined they had performed strongly in terms of their finances. Their financial strategy is designed to achieve a financial surplus, manage staff costs, and ensure they can make investments, so they remain sustainable.
- The Court of Governors continually reviewed the education provider's performance using several key performance indicators in areas related to sustainability. The education provider's long-term targets related to sustainability were monitored by the Court of Governors, its Committees, the Executive team, and the Senior Leadership Team. Progress against these key performance indicators was reported monthly and reviewed in detail every three months.
- The proposed higher education reforms by the government have been included in a revised five-year forecast. These forecasts are essential for the education provider to plan to meet financial commitments.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - The principal partners the education provider worked with were the learner's employer, and occasionally learners funded through other sources. The education provider needed to be assured of the quality of the training processes within the workplace. They also needed to be assured support was in place for the learners in accordance with the education provider's work-based learning policy. Employers of learners who were studying the apprenticeship programme include NHS Trusts, private health laboratories and private hospitals.
 - The education provider built on successful relationships through ongoing dialogue with training officers at each employer. They invited the training officers to regular information sessions where they were informed about programme content and future development. Training officers were also supported to understand the requirements of the programmes.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Academic quality –**
 - The education provider's complaints process allows learners to raise issues about academic provision. They explained they received no complaints related to the HCPC-approved programmes.
 - In the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework the education provider received silver for Student Experience, silver for Student Outcomes and silver overall. They were proud of this achievement. They considered this demonstrated their commitment to the learning experience of their learners.
 - External examiners supported the programmes and had praised the diversity of assessments. The education provider had planned to adopt external examiner advice about the potential to improve learner feedback.

- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Placement quality –**
 - The education provider has received an increasing number of learners from a more diverse array of employers. The education provider needed to ensure that the quality of practice-based learning delivered at the workplace equates to the quality expected by the university.
 - The education provider had partnerships with NHS and private pathology labs from the wider London area and beyond. They outlined the continued success of the partnership is ensured by close communication between the course team and representatives of the employer, usually laboratory training officers. This happened through monthly meetings to discuss and update on the programmes'-related queries.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
 - The education provider considered the potential for interprofessional education was limited. Learners were employed in a clinical environment and interacted with a variety of professions. This was encouraged through workplace tutors and interprofessional interaction. The role of the biomedical scientist in the healthcare team formed an element of the assessments in the module Learning in Professional Practice.
 - Learners had shared modules with other Life Sciences programmes, such as Human Nutrition and Medical Sciences. Many of these programmes did not have comparable service users to those on the biomedical science programmes. However, the ability to discuss module content with learners from different subjects was invaluable to learners and served to help them develop.
 - The education provider plans to run a Nursing and Physician Associate course in the next two years. The education provider is looking to develop further interprofessional education opportunities between the biomedical science programmes and these new programmes.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - The education provider considered learners and employers to be service users and carers respectively. This was because they had a responsibility towards their learners in terms of supporting their studies making them de facto 'carers'.
 - Learners were either apprentices or employed in a diagnostic pathology laboratory. Learners' exposure to patients and their carers was predominantly in their work role and in the on-the-job training. The introduction to and involvement of patients at level 6 was designed to augment and formalise that exposure. Patients did not formally feed

into programme development. The education provider welcomed informal feedback from patients on their sessions with learners. The education provider had not received any feedback from patients which had warranted changes to the programme.

- The visitors were unclear about how learners could act in the role of a service user or carer. For example, in terms of the HCPC description, which discusses how patients, and other individuals or groups who use, benefit from or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us, contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programmes. The visitors therefore considered there was a potential risk to the performance of the programme in terms of how it continued to demonstrate the appropriate HCPC standard. The visitors recommend this be reviewed through the focused review process.
- **Equality and diversity –**
 - A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) was enshrined within the education provider's Being Westminster and Education Strategy. The EDI Strategy set out the education provider's commitment to the curriculum.
 - The education provider explained monitoring of learners indicated there were no significant attainment gaps between different protected characteristics.
 - Each school's EDI Lead supported the embedding of strategic objectives. The education provider introduced learners to EDI policies during arrivals and orientation week sessions.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The apprenticeship programme had increased learner numbers over the past few years. This had brought challenges in staffing and other resources, and the School of Life Sciences had recruited additional full-time staff, which included ten academic staff of various disciplines.
 - As discussed in [quality theme 1](#), the education provider outlined the programmes had a variety of teaching rooms that could house groups of 30 to 380. They had invested in refurbishing existing specialist laboratory space and had built a new 84-seat laboratory. They had approved budget to build and equip a 90-seat teaching laboratory, which will begin construction in May 2024.
 - The education provider continued to monitor applications and ensured staffing was secured at an appropriate level for the programmes. The school embarked on a further round of staff recruitment this year. Many of those posts were in subject specialisms appropriate to biomedical science.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: The education provider considered learners and employers to be service users and carers respectively. This was because they had a responsibility towards their learners in terms of supporting their studies making them de facto 'carers'. Learners' exposure to patients and their carers came predominantly in their work role and in the on-the-job training. The introduction to and involvement of patients at level 6 was designed to augment and formalise that exposure. Patients did not formally feed into programme development. The education provider welcomed informal feedback from patients on their sessions with learners. The education provider had not received any feedback from patients which had warranted changes to the programme. However, the visitors considered as the education provider considered the learners on the programme to be service users, there was a potential risk to the performance of the programme in terms of how it continued to demonstrate the HCPC standards. They therefore considered the education provider should reflect on their performance in this area, how patients and other individuals or groups who use, benefit from or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us, contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programmes through the focused review process.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
 - The biomedical science programmes were revalidated in 2022. The revised SOPs had been embedded through the adoption of the new Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) v5.0 portfolio and changes to the programme. Once the new SOPs were released the revalidated programmes and new portfolio were re-mapped to identify any required modifications. Learners starting from September 2023 receive version five of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio.
 - Learners who started before 2023 will continue to complete version 4.3 of the IBMS portfolio. They have the new standards incorporated into their learning and will be assessed against the new SOPs at the External Portfolio Verification stage, as per guidance from IBMS.
 - In general, the education provider considered the programmes were already designed to promote active implementation of the revised SOPs.
 - The programmes had been designed to promote public health and wellbeing with the specific role of biomedical science in diagnostics and preventing ill-health. As such, no changes were made.
 - They were already designed with EDI principles in mind, and these were strengthened as part of the 2022 revalidation. The education provider updated the programmes so EDI was embedded in course and module learning outcomes.
 - Concepts of professionalism and appropriate communication with service users were introduced early in the programmes. The revised SOPs were further embedded as part of work-based learning elements.

These elements were already augmented in the 2022 revalidation of the programmes, and after re-mapping to the new SOPs the education provider considered no changes had to be made.

- Good mental and physical health was the focus of mandatory and self-directed learning modules available on the education provider's virtual learning environment (VLE). The education provider updated the programmes, so these aspects were further practiced and assessed in the module Advanced Learning in Professional Practice where it appeared as a module learning outcome.
- The education provider considered no changes had to be made to embed digital skills in the SOPs. Digital technologies were used throughout the programmes as part of teaching, learning and assessments and access to learning resources through the education provider's VLE, Blackboard. The learner's digital skills were developed through work-based learning where they were exposed to software packages bespoke to the profession including recording software. The use of such systems was explored through self-directed learning modules and work-based learning modules such as Learning from Professional Practice.
- The education provider considered no changes had to be made to embed leadership skills in the SOPs. The opportunity to develop leadership skills began in the module Professional Development in Science. Leadership skills were also a focus of several of the self-directed learning modules and were assessed through the IBMS registration training portfolio. Learners undertook a final year project, based in their workplace, where they were required to plan, execute and report on an individual research project.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Learning and developments from the COVID-19 pandemic –**
 - Covid-19 influenced the way the education provider delivered teaching in the short term.
 - The mode of programme delivery changed significantly over the past few years. There had been an increased use of online platforms to deliver teaching sessions with a move to entirely online delivery in early 2020 as a response to Covid-19. Over the course of Covid-19, technologies improved so the online environment was more conducive to learning.
 - The education provider had consequently kept some online delivery. For instance, some modules were now delivered half on-line and half on-site. This strategy was consolidated when the timetable was restructured. Learners had distinct online and on-site days with on-site sessions timetabled between 11am – 4pm. This structure had been well received by learners.
 - Not all aspects of the Covid-19 delivery strategy were kept. For example, 'hands on' laboratory sessions were preferred by learners,

compared with the live steaming small group practical classes the education provider ran during Covid-19.

- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - The use of technology was accelerated by Covid-19. Before Covid-19 the School of Life Sciences had adopted Labster laboratory simulations. This was not a replacement for traditional laboratory sessions but as supplementary to those sessions, either as a preparatory aid or as a refresher following the laboratory session. They also purchased an Anatomage virtual dissection table.
 - The education provider considered artificial intelligence (AI) needed to be embraced. They engaged with internal colleagues and learners to publish guidance on the use of generative AI in learning and teaching. They also updated academic integrity regulations to reflect how AI might be misused in assessments. The education provider bought the software Grammarly to support learners. They also funded projects about how generative AI can be used as part of teaching and learning and ensure learners are equipped to use AI in their careers.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Apprenticeships in England –**
 - The apprenticeship programme had seen an increase in learner numbers. The School of Life Sciences increased staffing in response, both within the school such as subject specific experts and within central teams who administered the apprenticeship programme. They employed a number of part-time visiting lecturers and had started recruiting ten additional academic staff of various disciplines. Recruitment was underway for a second Apprenticeship Skills Coach to help manage the increase in apprentice numbers.
 - Staff had been trained in the role of education provider-based tutor to help apprenticeship learners and their work-based tutors with the requirements of work-based learning modules. The number of training events, formal meetings and laboratory visits had increased to ensure communication with employers and training officers.
 - In 2022, Aptem, a new digital platform for recording and monitoring apprentice progress, was introduced. It kept records of assessments and learning. Aptem had simplified the management of apprenticeship records.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
 - The education provider informed us the UK Quality Code sets out the expectations for setting and maintaining standards and for managing the quality of provision. They considered alignment to the Quality Code is not mandatory for English education providers.
 - The Quality Assurance Agency is re-developing the Quality Code. The education provider outlined they planned to review this once it is published and will ensure they meet the code.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Office for Students (OfS) –**
 - The OfS has not undertaken any monitoring of the education provider during the review period.
 - The education provider ensured alignment to the revised B conditions - conditions of registration for quality and standards - through their processes set out in their Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook and Academic Regulations with respect to sector-recognised standards. They made some changes to their provision. These included moving to a risk-based approach to their continuous improvement process. The education provider outlined their use of data is linked to both Teaching Excellence Framework and B3 indicators and is embedded within their processes. The use of data has required training for staff members to understand the metrics, their position in relation to benchmarks, and how the data can be used to support enhancements.
 - The education provider engaged with the OfS about the requirement to retain assessed work for five years. They reflected it presented a challenge for some subject areas that result in large physical artifacts as assessments. They added they can retain assessments submitted electronically for the period specified by the OfS.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - The BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science (Apprenticeship) is also regulated by Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The education provider's whole HCPC approved provision is also accredited by the IBMS and the Royal Society of Biology (RSB).
 - Regulation by Ofsted and ESFA puts additional requirements on the delivery of the apprenticeship programme. For example, the use of tripartite reviews to consider learner progress, and requirements for safeguarding and Prevent. Prevent is the national programme that

aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, within the provision.

- Ofsted visited and monitored the programme in February 2023. The education provider was judged to be making reasonable progress. From this visit, the education provider has implemented a number of actions. For example, ensuring feedback on assessments includes how learners can improve or achieve higher grades. The education provider's Apprenticeship Board monitors progress against an Ofsted Quality Improvement Plan.
- The programmes were subject in 2021-22 to internal revalidation and reaccreditation by the IBMS and RSB. The programmes meet the requirements for revalidation and re-accreditation. They were re-accredited up to and including the 2026 intake.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing 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 outlined IBMS accreditation criteria:
 - Are prescriptive and must be met;
 - Are difficult to meet; and
 - Overlap with the criteria of the RSB.
 - The programmes have been designed to meet the requirements of both IBMS and RSB. Learners starting from September 2023 receive version five of the IBMS Registration Training Portfolio. The required content is delivered through a variety of teaching such as in:
 - the module Professional Development in Science;
 - work-based learning modules; and
 - training in learner's laboratories.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - The education provider's programmes are accredited by both the IBMS and the RSB and are subject to their annual monitoring processes. There is guidance for both their criteria for accreditation and annual monitoring. Changes in the accreditation criteria that need to be implemented outside of a standard re-accreditation cycle, for example the implementation of the changes to the HCPC SOPs via guidance issued by the IBMS, are circulated between the PSRBs and the education provider.

- At the most recent re-validation and re-accreditation updates to the IBMS and RSB criteria for accreditation were used to inform the programme design process. For example, the RSB criteria now include the need for creating learning environments to support and promote the development of creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- The education provider will continue to work with the PSRBs. They explained they will seek and respond to advice to ensure the best outcome for learners. They stated a number of their staff are members of one or both PSRBs and so are involved with the activities of these organisations. The education provider considered this provided further routes to guidance, advice and development.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**
 - The education provider considered the programmes are used by employers who want to develop their workforce through a programme of academic study. This includes a commitment from the employer to support the learner to provide workplace training which sits alongside academic studies.
 - The education provider explained this model means a mismatch between the numbers of practice-based learning available and the number of learners cannot arise. All learners are accommodated for the practice-based learning requirements of the programme.
 - While the number of practice-based learning opportunities is not a concern, practice-based learning has a significant staffing impact for the education provider. The bulk of day-to-day practice-based learning is delivered by workplace tutors. The education provider is seeing an increase in the number of employers wishing to send learners to the programme.
 - The education provider is undergoing a recruitment drive. Two thirds of those new colleagues who have been recruited or who are planned to be recruited will be in the Biomedical Science subject area and will contribute to the approved programmes. They anticipate this will meet their staffing needs for the immediate future. The education provider will continue to monitor numbers closely and either re-deploy or request additional staff should learner numbers continue to increase.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing 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 –**

- Learner feedback is received through a variety of methods. For example, learners are invited to complete Student Module Evaluation questionnaires each semester, to comment on and rate various aspects of the modules that they have taken that semester. Learners feedback on issues that are not necessarily directly related to their programme but nonetheless affect their learning experience on the education provider's Unitu system.
- Learners on the programmes had not raised any major areas of concern. However, learners fed back about other learners being disruptive in some of the larger shared modules at level 4. This was escalated to school management who instigated a series of interventions, including identifying disruptive elements, which have significantly improved the learning environment.
- Learners contributed to the revalidation process through discussions with revalidation panels. Learners have also fed back to provide praise for programme content, learning activities and programme staff. For example, they recognised enjoyable and relevant practical classes.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

- **Practice placement educators –**

- Practice educators fed back about the programmes in a variety of ways.
- Practice educators are the learner's employers. The education provider explained they consequently have an interest in the development and progression of their learners, and in the development of the programmes. As such there are a number of practice-based learning providers who are represented on the education provider's Employer Advisory Board. This board gives them the opportunity to feed into the education provider's plans, both for already approved programmes and for new programmes too. Practice educators are also consulted through events such as 'Train the Trainer' and the education provider's annual employer's day.
- Practice educators have not raised any significant concerns to the education provider. The education provider explained their involvement with the programmes provided invaluable feedback to improve the learner experience and ensure the programmes meet their needs.
- An example of practice educator feedback is they requested changes in the days in which learners attend the education provider. This was so learners attend the education provider on different days, depending upon their level of study. This was to ensure employers can maintain a balanced workforce where the laboratories are run effectively. The education provider accommodated this with minor changes to the programme timetable. It has resulted in a more balanced distribution of learner study time and workload within the laboratories.

- Employers requested different attendance days for each year group to reduce staff depletion on study days. The education provider had been able to accommodate this.
- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **External examiners –**
 - Two external examiners are employed across both programmes. The external examiners have rated the programmes as good or exemplary. They said learners' performance and the standards for the determination of awards are at a level comparable with other UK education providers. They also said the academic standards which have been set are appropriate for the level of study.
 - The external examiners have indicated they have no concerns about the quality of the programmes. They have fed back in some areas which would enhance the learner experience and the education provider has acted on that advice. For example, the external examiners recognised feedback supplied to learners is of a good standard and provides useful information for improvement. They stated the greater use of marking rubrics would provide a more consistent feedback format across modules. The education provider organised a series of 'conversation café' workshops for the programme staff on the use of rubrics to address this issue. The external examiners reported an improvement in later reports.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing 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 outlined the non-continuation data is above the benchmark figure which they considered a true representation of the learner group.
 - They saw the programmes as relatively small compared with other programmes at the education provider. They added it is a key part of their plans. Learners tend to be more mature who are already dedicated to their chosen profession as a Biomedical Scientist. Learners are funded and / or released by their employers to undertake the programme, and this tends to mean learners are more focussed individuals. The education provider stated it is rare when a learner fails to continue in their studies. If it does happen, it is generally due to

learners withdrawing from the programme due to personal reasons, rather than academic ability or support.

- We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
 - Outcomes for those who complete the programme data is slightly below the benchmark figure.
 - Learners on the programmes are required to be employed in an appropriate laboratory when they begin the programme. They need to remain employed for the duration of the programme, and generally return to work full time for the same employer once they have graduated. The education provider outlined it is rare when this does not happen, and is usually for personal reasons.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Learner satisfaction:**
 - The NSS overall satisfaction score is 4% below the benchmark. The education provider was disappointed with the data. They noted it is an institutional level figure from 2022 and at this time learners worked for the NHS in the response to Covid-19. They were subject to high workloads, which may have affected the responses.
 - The education provider stated the overall satisfaction score no longer features in the NSS data, but the NSS data for 2023 showed a satisfied group of learners. For example, in 2023, the score for teaching was 98.2% against a benchmark of 88.3%. The education provider considers the data is indicative of a successful relationship between the education provider and learners, and a programme which meets the needs of the learners.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
 - The education provider stated the programme exists in both an apprenticeship and direct entry form. The apprenticeship programme is the dominant pathway and recruitment to this has been increasing significantly over the past few years.
 - They recognised the staff / learner ratio from 2021-22 was above the benchmark. The education provider explained they monitored learner recruitment and staff / learner ratios, to ensure there are enough staff to deliver the programmes. They added the School of Life Sciences had recruited ten colleagues in 2023 and were working to recruit another ten in 2024.
 - The education provider informed us the programmes had seen an increase in learner numbers in recent years. They recognised the staff / learner ratio is above benchmark.
 - We were satisfied with how the education provider is performing in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: None.

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).

Referrals to the focused review process

Service user involvement in the overall quality and effectiveness of the programmes

Summary of issue: The education provider considered learners and employers to be service users and carers respectively. Learners' exposure to patients and their carers came predominantly in their work role and in the on-the-job training. Patients did not formally feed into programme development. The education provider welcomed informal feedback from patients on their sessions with learners. However, the visitors considered as the education provider considered the learners on the programme to be service users, there was a potential risk to the performance of the programme in terms of how it continued to demonstrate the HCPC standards. They therefore considered the education provider should reflect on their performance in this area, how patients and other individuals or groups who use, benefit from or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us, contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programmes through the focused review process. We considered it most appropriate to review this through the focused review process as the visitors have recommended the education provider next engage with our performance review process in five years.

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 2028-29 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report

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 a number of professional bodies. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision
 - The education provider engaged with Ofsted and the ESFA. They considered the findings of Ofsted and the ESFA in improving their provision.
 - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply
 - Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period.
- What the data is telling us:
 - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.

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 2028-29 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out through the focused review process

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through 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
University of Westminster	CAS-01372-X6Q5G1	Emmanuel Babafemi and Julie Weir	Five years	<p>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.</p> <p>The education provider engaged with a number of professional bodies and regulators, and considered their findings in improving their provision.</p> <p>Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor</p>	<p>The education provider considered learners and employers to be service users and carers respectively. This was because they had a responsibility towards their learners in terms of supporting their studies making them de facto 'carers'. Learners' exposure to patients and their carers came predominantly in their work role and in the on-the-job training. The introduction to and involvement of patients at level 6 was designed to augment and formalise that exposure. Patients did not formally feed into programme development. The education provider welcomed informal feedback from patients on their sessions with learners. The education provider had</p>

				<p>changes to key performance areas within the review period.</p> <p>From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.</p>	<p>not received any feedback from patients which had warranted changes to the programme. However, the visitors considered as the education provider considered the learners on the programme to be service users, there was a potential risk to the performance of the programme in terms of how it continued to demonstrate the HCPC standards. They therefore considered the education provider should reflect on their performance in this area, how patients and other individuals or groups who use, benefit from or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us, contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programmes through the focused review process.</p>
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Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Sciences	PT (Part time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2007
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science (Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2017