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## Approval process report

University College Birmingham, dietetics, 2022 / 23

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### **Executive Summary**

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

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found we need to further explore how standards are met in this area via quality activities.
- Recommended a condition be set on approval of the programme, which would need to be met before we can confirm programme approval
- Decided the condition not be set on approval of the programme. We decided all the standards are met, and that the programme is approved.

The education provider supplied observations which were considered in decision making.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The recommended condition focused on:
  - The visitors noted the numerous methods and processes outlined by the education provider to explain their contingency planning in relation to appropriate numbers of Practice Educators. These included:
    - The important role the WMDPEP plays to ensure all learners have access to practice-based learning with a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
    - The exploration undertaken by the education provider, to expand and enrich the range of practice-based learning opportunities. This reduces the risk of learners not being placed in suitable practice-based learning, with a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
    - The commitment received from independent providers to support practice-based learning and provide appropriate supervision.

The visitors noted most practice-based learning, and associated supervision, will be obtained through the BSOL group. In addition, they recognised the contingency plans in place should practice education providers be unable to provide practice-based learning and appropriate Practice Educators.

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- However, while the visitors recognised the processes and groups involved, they noted that there is not confirmed capacity of effective practice-based learning after Placement A in the first year. There is therefore a potential risk the education provider may not be able to source sufficient capacity and / or practice educators. Therefore, the visitors sought more information about how the education provider has mitigated against these risks.
  - The following is an area of best practice:
    - The education provider informed us they had used X (formerly Twitter) to invite recently qualified dietitians from any approved programme to give feedback on their learning. The education provider held an online discussion to identify changes these graduates would like to have seen about the programme they had studied. The education provider then considered whether this feedback could be incorporated into the development of their programme. The visitors considered the education provider designed an innovative way to gain feedback from graduate dietitians with this stakeholder event.
  - The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
    - The visitors considered the education provider has a process to ensure all learners receive appropriate practice-based learning. They also considered the education provider has a process to ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning. The visitors considered that while these processes are in place, there is not confirmed capacity of practice-based learning after the first placement (Placement A). There is therefore a potential risk the education provider may not be able to source sufficient capacity and, as such, an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators. Therefore, the education provider should reflect on their implementation of practice-based learning for the first year of the programme and their planning for the second year, in terms of continuing to ensure:
      - appropriate capacity of practice-based learning; and
      - an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators to provide support for learners.
    - The education provider should provide their reflections through the Focused Review process in February 2025.
  - The programme meets all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore is approved. The education provider's observations were considered in making this decision.

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Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval was not referred to us from another process.
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**Decision** The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide:

- whether the programme(s) is approved, and
- whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how

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**Next steps** Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:

- The provider's next performance review is in the 2023-24 academic year. The education provider is scheduled to submit their documents on 16 February 2024.
- Subject to the Panel's decision, we will undertake further investigations as per section 5.

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## Section 1: About this assessment

### About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

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

### Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

### Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

### The approval process

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

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

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

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

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

### **How we make our decisions**

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### **The assessment panel for this review**

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Helen White	Lead visitor, dietitian
Paula Charlesworth	Lead visitor, dietitian
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer
Tracey Samuel-Smith	Education Manager

## **Section 2: Institution-level assessment**

### **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 2020. This programme will sit within the education provider's Department for Health.

The education provider is part of the BSOL Dietetic Placement Group, for the allocation of practice-based learning across the BSOL region. This group consists of all education providers who offer dietetic education in the region and practice-based learning providers. This group collaborates to allocate practice-based learning for all education providers in the region, across the duration of the programmes. Education providers come to the group with their practice-based learning requests. The practice-based learning providers inform the education providers of how many learners they can accommodate.

The education provider works with the BSOL Placement Capacity and Forecasting Allied Health Professions group, as well as the NHS England Midlands (formerly Health Education England (HEE)) Clinical Placement Stakeholder Group Midlands, to ensure there is sufficient and appropriate practice-based learning for learners. As part of this group, the education provider liaises with practice-based learning partners monthly. They attend capacity meetings and the BSOL Quality Group. These feed into the BSOL Education Partnership Group which oversees practice, quality, and governance issues of healthcare education in the BSOL region.

### 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
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2020

### Institution performance data

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

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

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers	50	70	2022	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as

<p>compared to total enrolment numbers</p>				<p>through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the education provider is proposing through the new provision.</p> <p>As detailed in <a href="#">quality theme 1</a> and <a href="#">quality theme 2</a>, we explored whether there are sufficient resources for an effective programme. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's response and did not need further information.</p>
<p>Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing</p>	<p>8%</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>2019-20</p>	<p>This data was sourced from summary data. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</p> <p>The data point is above 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%.</p> <p>We explored this data point through this assessment. We were satisfied there was no impact on the SETs considered through this process.</p>



<p>Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study</p>	<p>94%</p>	<p>88%</p>	<p>2019-20</p>	<p>This 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 improved by 3%.</p> <p>We explored this data point through this assessment. We were satisfied there was no impact on the SETs considered through this process.</p>
<p>National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)</p>	<p>77.7%</p>	<p>69.4%</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the summary. 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 dropped by 6%.</p> <p>We explored the data points and information relating to how the programme meets the standards. We considered learners were satisfied and did not require further information.</p>

## The route through stage 1

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

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

### Admissions

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Information for applicants –**
  - The education provider's admissions policy and procedures are set at institutional level and will apply to this programme. The policy will reflect all admissions criteria and expectations for the programme.
  - Programme information will be clearly published on the webpages of the education provider.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
  - These requirements will be clearly published to applicants on the webpages of the education provider. A declaration of health and good character will need to be submitted as part of the application process.
  - Applicants are required to have enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) clearance.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**
  - The education provider's policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning clearly outlines the requirements in this area. This policy is set at an institutional level.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider is committed to fairness and anti-discriminatory practice. They have an equality of opportunity policy. This policy is set at an institutional level.

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

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

### Management and governance

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register<sup>1</sup> –**
  - The education provider's academic regulations give information about the awards which they may offer, and the processes and criteria for obtaining an award. They may be amended by the Academic Regulations Committee of Academic Board to reflect pre-registration Masters provision.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
  - The education provider outlined how the Department of Health, which includes nursing and allied health professions, has grown in respect of nursing provision over the past two and a half years.
  - Learner numbers on the undergraduate physiotherapy programmes have increased across the last three years. The education provider has made investment to support the new programme in terms of staffing and resources to ensure they meet the needs of the regional healthcare workforce.
  - The education provider aims to start with a cohort of 20 learners. They consider the programme will provide an opportunity for progression. The education provider is looking to increase learner numbers by 25 percent each year.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
  - The programme will take a blended approach to academic study. This will be enhanced with simulation and immersive learning.
  - Interprofessional education will be a key component of the academic and practical elements of the course. Practice-based learning will be embedded throughout the programme.

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

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
  - The programme management document is at school level and details how the programme is operationalised with key staff and functions.
  - The annual planning cycle is conducted at institutional level. Each year heads of department submit their annual planning documentation to executive management team. This document details staff and other resource requests for the forthcoming academic year. This provides the opportunity to highlight predicted learner numbers against existing resources and provide requests for any further staff or resources.
  - The programme has a Programme Leader who is a registered dietitian. The education provider will also recruit a Practice-Based Learning Coordinator for dietetics. The programme team also includes two full time nutritionists. The education provider will recruit additional staff for the programme with the relevant subject specialism required.
  - The programme team includes a Head of Interprofessional Learning, Simulation, and Immersive Technology.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
  - The education provider is well-established within the BSOL practice-based learning network. They also have strong partnerships with a number of private healthcare providers. The education provider works with practice education partners to establish practice-based learning provision, structure, and timings.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Academic quality –**
  - The education provider has a programme quality review, enhancement, and monitoring process at institutional level. The Programme Lead leads this process collaboratively with the Head / Deputy Head of Department. There is input from relevant Deputy Deans, module leaders and teaching teams, Personal Tutors, professional services,

and practice-based learning providers. The learner voice is also a part of this process.

- At mid-module review, programmes seek learner feedback. Programmes act on any academic issues within the module to ensure they respond to issues of concern as they arise.
- The education provider has institutional codes of practice to ensure academic rigour and quality in assessment and feedback:
  - Code of Practice on Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback; and
  - Code of Practice on Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.
- Programmes have an External Examiner who provides advice and comments on academic standards and learner achievement. They oversee the assessment process at module and programme level.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
  - The education provider has annual programme review days with practice education partners, learners, and other key stakeholders.
  - The education provider has practice education governance processes which cover all aspects of practice-based learning quality. The nursing and allied health programme quality assurance processes document covers practice-based learning audit, Care Quality Commission monitoring and reporting, evaluations, raising and escalating concerns, and incident reporting. It also covers all aspects of pre-practice-based learning requirements such as occupational health and DBS clearance, monitoring of accidents and incidents, complaints, and reasonable adjustments.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement –**
  - The subject board is the main formal board for staff and learner liaison for individual programmes. Any matters relevant to the academic management or the running of the programme may be brought forward to the subject board. On the subject board there is at least one learner who represents each year of the programme. The board of studies considers matters of common or particular importance brought forward from the subject boards.
  - Learner representatives are included as part of the annual quality monitoring and enhancement process for their academic programme. Learners are also a key part of the consultation process on new programme development.

- Learners have regular opportunities to have an informal, online or face to face, discussion with the Executive Dean of the school, as well as with other key staff based on learner feedback on issues of interest.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
  - The education provider has an active Service User Collaborative Group (SUCG) who meet four times per year. This group supports curriculum development, learner recruitment process, and assessment. Service users provide specialist input into specific elements of the curriculum. They participate in approval events to provide their perspective on the effectiveness of working collaboratively with the education provider.
  - The composition of SUCG reflects the education provider's consideration of equality, diversity, and inclusion, with members of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and backgrounds.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

### Learners

#### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Support –**
  - The education provider's Centre for Academic Skills and English offers tailored support to learners. A range of support and resources are available to learners to support their learning, and these are delivered by Academic Development Tutors or Academic Librarians.
  - The education provider has a free and confidential health and wellbeing service which is open to all learners and staff. The service promotes and encourages healthy lifestyles and positive mental health. The team is available to help learners manage any difficulties or concerns they may have.
  - In addition, learners have access to the Student Assistance Programme who provide mental health support. This is a free and confidential service, designed to help learners deal with personal or academic problems which could be affecting their home life, health, or general wellbeing.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Ongoing suitability –**
  - The education provider’s policy on Assuring Student Fitness to Practise will apply to the new programme.
  - The Code of Practice on Discipline applies to all learners and works in conjunction with General Student Regulations, Code of Practice on Plagiarism, and Academic Misconduct, Assuring Students Fitness to Practice and the Student Charter.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
  - The education provider’s interprofessional learning (IPL) document has guidance for the embedding of IPL. This ensures learners learn from and with other health care professionals and wider health and social care professionals.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider’s access and participation plan sets out how they will improve the equality of opportunity for under-represented groups to access, succeed and progress in higher education.
  - The education provider employs a Director of Inclusive Curriculum. They are developing a curriculum framework which builds upon racial equality training for staff. The framework will be used to design and deliver new programmes, as well as addressing issues such as anti-racist curriculum.
  - The education provider’s institutional strategy builds on their reputation for supporting a diverse learner body.
  - The education provider has a learning and teaching strategy. It has three pillars, one of which is providing accessible and inclusive teaching and learning.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment:** None

## Assessment

### **Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Objectivity** –
  - The Moderation Code of Practice sets out the parameters and minimum requirements regarding internal moderation. It is an institutional code.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - The education provider's Code of Practice on Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback applies to all programmes. Academic regulations: Part 2 Assessment, Progression and Award sets out the regulations for:
    - assessing learners;
    - progression from one stage of a programme to the next;
    - granting and calculation of awards; and
    - the conduct of degree congregations.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals** –
  - The education provider's Assessment Appeals Procedure is an institution-level policy which sets out the assessment appeals procedure available to all learners.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

**Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None**

### **Outcomes from stage 1**

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

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

- There are two dietitians who are leading on the development of the programme. The education provider has recruited a full time Senior Lecturer as the Programme Lead, one Lecturer – both are registered dietitians - and a



part time Placement Lead. Another Lecturer is due to be recruited for February 2024. The wider teaching team includes two nutritionists who are registered with the Association for Nutrition. The education provider uses dietitian visiting lecturers to support the delivery of the programme. The education provider will appoint additional permanent staff as learner numbers increase. A process of calculating the staff:student ratio is used to support decision-making for new staff and to ensure quality provision is maintained.

- The education provider has a variety of facilities to support the programme. Learners will receive hands-on training and experience in the Health Skills and Simulation Suite. This suite includes a ward hospital bay. There is a range of full-size manikins. The home room has an ensuite bathroom. It can also replicate a doctor or nurse consultation room. There is a monitoring suite to record learning and teaching. There is a Food Science and Innovation Suite so learners can create and cook menus. This suite incorporates two kitchens, and other food science facilities. Learners have access to a Kick Start Fund. They receive credit of up to £800 in each year of study to buy programme-related materials.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

### Section 3: Programme-level assessment

#### Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
MSc Dietetics (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Dietitian	20 learners, 1 cohort	February 2024

#### Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

#### Data / intelligence considered

We also considered intelligence from others, as follows:

- NHS England (formerly HEE) Midlands - We received information considering current pressures regarding practice-based learning for physiotherapy in the Midlands. The information was reviewed, and we considered it would not impact on this assessment.

### **Quality themes identified for further exploration**

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

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

Visitors reviewed the initial documentary submission and fed back the areas and reasoning to determine the first quality activity. The education provider provided a second set of documents. Visitors reviewed this second submission and fed back the areas and reasoning to determine the second quality activity. This resulted in the education provider providing an email with further information before a third visitor assessment. This was classed as the third quality activity. Not all quality themes were assessed via three quality activities.

#### Quality theme 1 – an effective process to ensure practice-based learning for all learners.

##### **Quality activity 1**

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider informed us that as part of the BSOL Dietetic Placement Group, they liaised monthly with all practice-based learning partners. The education provider stated they also had partnerships with a number of private healthcare partners. For example, Cygnet Healthcare, Birmingham City Council Public Health, and the voluntary sector. We were informed these organisations had committed to offering the education provider practice-based learning opportunities.

The education provider informed the visitors there are four periods of practice-based learning:

- Placement A consisting of two weeks during the first semester of year one.
- Placement B consisting of two weeks of simulation and ten weeks in a practice setting. It will take place in the second semester of year one.
- Placement C consisting of 12 weeks in a practice setting during the second semester of year two.
- Placement D consisting of two weeks during the second semester of year two.

Placement A uses practice-based learning from Birmingham City Council Public Health and non-profit organisations. The visitors recognised the BSOL Four Box report was an account of the actions from the BSOL group meetings. It provided information about progress on work, risks and issues, and deadlines. The visitors noted the report highlighted issues of two proposed programmes – one of which is the programme under assessment – and an anticipated ‘pinch point’ of practice-based learning. The visitors were unsure how the education provider will ensure there is sufficient practice-based learning across the duration of the programme.

The education provider also informed us they would be looking for a 25% increase in learner numbers in the future. The visitors were unsure how the education provider has planned for this increase and the impact on practice-based learning capacity.

The visitors were therefore unsure of the process and, its effectiveness, to secure practice-based learning for learners throughout the programme, now and in the future. They sought more information about this.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider informed the visitors Placements B and C will incorporate a mix of clinical and non-clinical opportunities within the BSOL area as well as in 16 other NHS Trusts within the region. They also stated they are developing relationships to secure clinical practice-based learning in Liverpool. The visitors recognised the practice-based learning in Liverpool would not be considered by the BSOL group.

Pinch points were identified where there will be an overlap of learners from more than one programme undertaking practice-based learning. The education provider outlined how they would avoid this. This would be done by developing the programme’s practice-based learning with the other education providers delivering dietetics in the region. We understood this is under review through the BSOL Dietetics Group and the West Midlands Dietetic Practice Educator Partnership (WMDPEP). The WMDPEP has been established for the four education providers who run dietetics programmes in the West Midlands to collaborate on practice-based learning. For example, to develop consistent practice educator training.

The visitors understood Placement D is leadership practice-based learning. The education provider stated Birmingham City Council Public Health will be one of the providers of this. We understood long arm supervision models are being developed to support this. The education provider informed us practice-based learning availability is subject to change and is under constant review. They added all practice-based learning planning must go through the BSOL Dietetics Group where any pinch points will be identified and worked through with the group. The WMDPEP will look at the rest of the Trusts outside of the BSOL partnership.

The education provider informed us the planned increase in learner numbers is for 25%, the equivalent to five learners. They stated this will be sourced through the NHS Trusts outside of BSOL and by using different practice-based learning models. The visitors had no further questions relating to this element.

The visitors were satisfied with the additional information provided about the process. However, as availability was noted as being subject to change, they remained unsure how the process demonstrated effectiveness in ensuring sufficient capacity. They therefore sought more information about this.

### **Quality activity 2**

**Area for further exploration:** In response, the education provider informed us Placement A will take place in week seven of the programme, after Easter 2024. They confirmed Placement A is fully allocated already and uses practice-based learning from outside of the education provider's NHS partners.

We understood Placement B will take place in week 18 of the programme, in July 2024. The education provider informed us they had requested their allocation through the BSOL Group as per the standard process. We recognised confirmation of the education provider's allocation will be in early 2024. The education provider is confident they will have all predicted learners allocated through BSOL.

The education provider informed us Placements C and D take place in 2025. They stated they will request their allocation in summer 2024 through the BSOL Group. The visitors recognised this is the standard process for requesting practice-based learning.

**Outcomes of exploration:** We noted the education provider had planned Placements B and C to run during a period when the other education providers within the BSOL region are not using local NHS practice-based learning capacity. We understood this would reduce the potential for an overlap of learners wanting to access practice-based learning at the same time.

The visitors recognised the process the education provider undertakes to secure practice-based learning through the BSOL group. The visitors noted the minutes of the BSOL Dietetics Placement Group on 20 July 2023 stated the group had encountered issues about the number of learners who could undertake practice-based learning at one time. For example, in paediatric and simulation practice-based learning. The visitors were consequently unclear of the education provider's contingency plans to ensure there is sufficient practice-based learning for all learners, should they not be able to source sufficient capacity through BSOL. The visitors sought more information about this.

### **Quality activity 3**

**Area for further exploration:** In response, the visitors were satisfied Placement A is fully allocated and consequently had no further questions about this. They also understood Placement B takes place in July 2024, which is week 18 of the programme. The visitors noted the education provider has requested their allocation with the BSOL Group. Confirmation of allocation will be in early 2024. The visitors noted the education provider had received confirmation from University Hospital

Coventry and Warwickshire they will support their new provision and provide practice-based learning positions.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors noted the numerous methods and processes outlined by the education provider to explain their contingency planning. These included:

- The important role the WMDPEP play in maximising capacity and reducing pinch points through collaboration across the region. In addition, the role the WMDPEP play in expanding access to paediatric practice-based learning.
- Using simulation to train six to eight learners at one time, on site at the education provider. Thus, relieving pressure on clinical environments.
- Building in flexibility within the structure of practice-based learning to allow extra weeks for learning, if necessary.
- Working to increase practice-based learning opportunities in a wide range of settings. For example, approaching 15 NHS Trusts across the wider region.

The visitors noted the education provider obtains most practice-based learning through the BSOL group, and that the education provider has contingency plans should practice education providers be unable to provide practice-based learning. The visitors were satisfied the evidence provided assured them the education provider has a process in place to make sure all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

However, while the visitors recognised the processes and groups involved, they noted that there is not confirmed capacity of effective practice-based learning after Placement A in the first year. There is therefore a potential risk the education provider may not be able to source sufficient capacity. Therefore, the education provider should reflect on their implementation of practice-based learning for the first year of the programme and their planning for the second year, in terms of continuing to ensure appropriate capacity of effective practice-based learning. The education provider should provide their reflections through the Focused Review process in February 2025.

### Quality theme 2 – academic staffing on the programme

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors were informed of the individuals who were going to be working on the programme. They understood their responsibilities, as set out in the programme management document. They considered the curriculum vitae demonstrated there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff. However, the visitors were unsure how the staff were going to be deployed in terms of the time they will spend on the proposed programme. The visitors were consequently unsure whether the proportion of staff time spent working on the programme ensured there were appropriate resources to deliver it effectively. They therefore sought more information about this.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider informed us the new members of staff will be full time and will not teach on any other provision. The education provider stated they will meet the British Dietetic Association (BDA) staff:student ratio of 1:12. The visitors were informed the education provider has a further three dietitians who have module leadership responsibility and teaching within their teaching and learning commitments. The number of full-time dietitian staff will also increase before the start of the second cohort of the programme.

The visitors noted visiting lecturers and subject specialists from the education provider will be used throughout the programme. Subject specialists will have a clear understanding of the hours for the programme as this is incorporated into their timetable. We noted staff timetables are managed by the heads of departments to ensure full allocation of timetabled hours for the appropriate running of the programme.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence provided assured them how the programme staff were going to be deployed ensured the delivery of an effective programme.

### Quality theme 3 – integration of practice-based learning in the programme

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors recognised there are four periods of practice-based learning in the programme. They noted Placements A and D are timed when further modules are running alongside them. The visitors were therefore unsure how these periods of practice-based learning were integrated into the programme, and so were aligned with module delivery and assessments. Consequently, the visitors were unsure how practice-based learning would support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency. They therefore sought more information about this area.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider informed us Placements A and D are both 75 hours in duration. They stated there is a designated timeframe for learners to undertake each before week 17 of the respective year of the programme. We were informed the reason for this is it provides flexibility for when the 75 hours are to be taken and consequently reduces the pressure on practice educators. We understood it also allows the education provider to maximise their capacity with regards to practice-based learning.

The education provider informed us Placement D provides learners with an opportunity to demonstrate their autonomy and leadership competencies. They added it is embedded within the module Leadership, Service Improvement and Sustainability. We understood learners develop an individualised programme to suit their interests in line with the learning outcomes of the module and the capabilities of Placement D.

The education provider stated they have adopted an inclusive approach to practice-based learning. Their approach supports learners who may have additional responsibilities and commitments. We were informed the design of Placements A

and D have been considered in line with the assessment and module delivery. We recognised this is to ensure learners are not disadvantaged. The education provider outlined how taking a flexible approach will mean learners are able to manage their time effectively.

The visitors were satisfied the evidence provided assured them how these periods of practice-based learning are integrated into the programme. We were satisfied the evidence assured they are aligned with module delivery and assessments. Learners are therefore able to meet the learning outcomes for the programme and the standards of proficiency.

## Section 4: Findings

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

### Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before education providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors recommend that the following conditions are met before the programme can be approved.

SET 5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

SET 5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

**Condition:** The education provider should provide further information about how they mitigate against any potential risks of not being able to source a sufficient number of practice educators who are appropriately qualified, experienced and trained.

### **Reason: Quality activity 1**

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider informed us they will source practice-based learning from the Trusts in the BSOL region and other organisations outside of this group, should this be necessary. The education provider informed us the programme team will ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff involved within this practice-based learning. They stated they will

develop practice educator training to be available to all practice educators and establish 'new practice educator' training for those new to practice-based learning. We were informed the WMDPEP will work to enhance practice educator training that already occurs within the region to ensure it is representative of the partnership and be consistent across the education providers.

From the information provided, the education provider had not submitted sufficient information with regards to staff numbers and how they will ensure they have appropriate qualifications and experience. The visitors sought more information about these areas.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider outlined the regular online and face-to-face training and support offered to practice educators. For example, the creation of a WMDPEP Teams Group to provide support and guidance. The visitors also recognised the mechanisms in place to monitor this and how they were regularly reviewed to ensure the quality of practice-based learning. However, the visitors were unsure of the content of the training, and so could not be assured it was appropriate and effective.

In terms of qualifications and experience, the education provider informed us they will be meeting requirements set by the BDA regarding practice-based learning supervision. They stated nearly all supervision will be undertaken by HCPC-registered dietitians within the Hospital Trusts. The visitors recognised the BDA Curriculum Framework states professional, or support workers can provide evidence of competence. We were informed the education provider will work with practice-based learning providers to ensure they meet the framework. If learners are at a practice learning site that does not have a dietitian, they will be supervised by a senior member of staff with support from a HCPC-registered dietitian via the long arm supervision model.

The visitors were unclear about the capacity and the effectiveness of securing practice-based learning. They were consequently unclear about the number of appropriately qualified and experienced Practice Educators required, to support learners through both the BSOL model and organisations outside of the BSOL region.

## **Quality activity 2**

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider explained further about the development, content, and delivery of Practice Educator training. The visitors therefore had no further queries about the training to be delivered to Practice Educators.

The education provider explained the allocation process of practice-based learning within the BSOL region relies on Dietetic Managers identifying their capacity at each site. They informed us this will ensure there is a sufficient number of qualified and experienced dietitians to supervise learners. In addition, all learners will have a dedicated Placement Support Tutor (PST) from the education provider while in



practice-based learning. New practice-based learning providers will be audited to ensure there is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

The education provider outlined how they will use a variety of learner supervision models in practice-based learning. For example, one to one supervisor learner ratio, technology enabled care, and long-arm supervision. The education provider will use long-arm supervision where learners are in settings with no qualified dietitian or registered healthcare professional. For example, in a voluntary setting such as community food cafes, care homes, and sports clubs. They stated there will be an experienced dietetic educator at the education provider to give support. We understood methods of practice supervision will be audited to ensure they are fit for purpose and provide a quality learning experience.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors recognised the process the education provider undertakes to secure practice-based learning through the BSOL group. The education provider explained Practice Educators in these settings will receive support from experienced dietetic educators at the education provider. However, the visitors were unsure of the contingency plans the education provider had in place should they not be able to secure practice-based learning through the BSOL group.

The visitors noted the minutes of the BSOL Dietetics Placement Group on 20 July 2023 stated the group had encountered issues about the number of learners who could undertake practice-based learning at one time. For example, in paediatric and simulation practice-based learning. They were consequently unsure if the education provider has secure alternative practice-based learning, and how they plan and ensure there are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff within practice-based learning. For example, through contingency planning. They sought more information about this.

### **Quality activity 3**

**Area for further exploration:** The visitors understood the education provider has processes and mechanisms in place to ensure learners have enough support to take part in safe and effective practice-based learning. For example, long-arm supervision will be used where learners are in settings where there is no qualified dietitian or registered healthcare professional.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The visitors noted the multiple methods and processes outlined by the education provider to explain their contingency planning in relation to appropriate numbers of Practice Educators. These included:

- The important role the WMDPEP plays to ensure all learners have access to practice-based learning with enough appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- The exploration undertaken by the education provider, to expand and enrich the range of practice-based learning opportunities. This reduces the risk of

learners not being placed in suitable practice-based learning, with a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

- The commitment received from independent providers to support practice-based learning and provide appropriate supervision.

The visitors noted most practice-based learning, and associated supervision, will be obtained through the BSOL group. In addition, they recognised the contingency plans in place should practice education providers be unable to provide practice-based learning and appropriate Practice Educators.

However, while the visitors recognised the processes and groups involved, they noted that there is not confirmed capacity of effective practice-based learning after Placement A in the first year. There is therefore a potential risk the education provider may not be able to source sufficient capacity and / or practice educators. Therefore, the visitors sought more information about how the education provider has mitigated against these risks.

### **Overall findings on how standards are met**

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

#### **Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - Applicants must have an honours degree (2:2 or above) in a health or science-related subject. Each application will be considered individually, and the final decision will be made by the Programme Lead.
  - Applicants need English and Mathematics GCSEs at grade C / 4 or above, or equivalent. International applicants need International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent of 7 overall, with no component lower than 6.5.
  - The entry requirements are available on the education provider's website.
  - Applicants will be interviewed and are required to undertake an occupational health screening and obtain a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership –**
  - The programme has been developed with practice-based learning partners and wider stakeholders. For example, service users and carers, and recently qualified dietitians.
  - As detailed in [quality theme 1](#), the education provider is a member of the BSOL Dietetics Placement Group. As part of this group, they liaise with practice-based learning partners monthly. They attend capacity meetings and the BSOL Quality Group. These feed into the overall BSOL Education Partnership Group which oversees practice, quality, and governance issues in respect of healthcare education in the BSOL region.
  - The education provider has led on the development of the WMDPEP. This group includes the education providers who run or propose to run dietetic programmes in the region. This partnership ensures consistency of paperwork and processes across the region for assessing learners in practice-based learning.
  - The education provider has partnerships with private healthcare partners, Birmingham City Council Public Health, and the voluntary sector. These partners have committed to offering practice-based learning. The education provider also has partnerships with University Hospitals Birmingham, Practice Plus Group and Cygnet Healthcare. There is ongoing collaboration to support learners. This is through monthly meetings to discuss practice-based learning, issues, changes, and problem areas.
  - The programme team have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and experience to deliver the programme effectively. As detailed in [quality theme 2](#), two members of staff were recruited in September 2023. They will be full time and will not teach on any other provision. The visitors were informed the education provider has a further three dietitians who have module leadership responsibility and teaching within their teaching and learning commitments. Visiting lecturers and subject specialists from the education provider will be used throughout the programme.
  - A dietetic resource document provides an overview of all learning materials and resources, including links to the education provider's simulation facilities. There is a comprehensive range of support teams available to support learners and give them advice, skills, and practical tools.
  - Programme rooms include teaching and breakout spaces, a kitchen, a health skills and simulation suite, and library.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
  - The module descriptors demonstrated the learning outcomes for the programme have been mapped to the Standards of proficiency (SOPs) for dietitians.
  - The learning outcomes meet the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics, as evidenced by the module descriptors.
  - The programme aims and learning outcomes have been developed in line with the SOPs for dietetics and the BDA Curriculum Framework 2020. The programme is also aligned to the University Learning and Teaching Strategy, and the Strategic Plan.
  - The curriculum has been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including service users and carers, Practice Educators and recently qualified dietitians. This is to ensure it is relevant and fit for purpose. The education provider's Programme Quality Enhancement and Monitoring process ensures programmes remain current and evidence-based.
  - The programme structure and curriculum design ensure theory and practice are integrated throughout the programme. As detailed in [quality theme 3](#), practice-based learning is integrated into the programme so is aligned with module delivery and assessments.
  - There are a range of teaching methods, for example lectures, seminars, tutorials, and practical sessions.
  - Learners will develop online and digital competencies. They will experience simulated learning approaches and multiprofessional learning opportunities. This is carried out through the implementation of IPL guidance and the Simulation and Digital Strategy.
  - Reflection skills are embedded within learning outcomes throughout the programme. There is a scaffolded approach to the teaching and the application of reflection in both taught modules and practice-based learning modules. The development of reflective thinking is clear and evidenced within the practice-based learning handbook.
  - The curriculum builds on knowledge and skills throughout the programme to develop critical thinking and autonomous decision-making. Research and evidence-based practice are embedded throughout the programme.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
  
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**
  - The education provider has ensured practice-based learning is integral to the programme. Learners spend 1,050 hours in practice-based learning throughout the two years of the programme to meet the learning outcomes. Differing settings are used. Practice-based learning has been mapped to the SOPs for dietitians.
  - There are four periods of practice-based learning in the programme. There is a timeframe for learners to undertake Placements A and D to

ensure it provides flexibility for when they are to be taken and so reduces the pressure on Practice Educators. It also allows the education provider to maximise their capacity with regards to practice-based learning.

- There are four hospital Trusts involved in BSOL. They will ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff involved with practice-based learning. The education providers who are a part of WMDPEP will develop the existing Practice Educator training within the region. They will ensure Practice Educator training is representative of the partnership.
  - Regular practice-based learning audits will take place to ensure any issues can be identified and addressed.
  - Learners are prepared prior to attending practice-based learning.
  - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment –**
    - The assessment strategy is underpinned by the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and Inclusive Assessment and Inclusive Assessment Guidance.
    - Assessments are appropriate to assess the skills and knowledge required to meet the SOPs. The education provider used their Inclusive Assessment Guidance to develop modules. We were informed the module credit is therefore aligned to the University Assessment Strategy.
    - Assessments are designed to assess the skills and knowledge required to meet the standards of proficiency and requirements for the profession of dietetics.
    - There are a range of assessment types. The Programme Specification and Module Descriptors outline the range of assessments. For example, case studies, viva, exams, and essays. Assessments are appropriate for learners to demonstrate skills and capabilities against the practice-based learning competencies.
    - The visitors therefore considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:** The education provider informed us they had used X (formerly Twitter) to invite recently qualified dietitians, from any approved programme, to give feedback on their learning. The education provider held an online discussion to identify changes these graduates would like to have seen about the programme they had studied. The education provider then considered whether this feedback could be incorporated into the development of their programme. The visitors considered the education provider designed an innovative way to gain feedback from graduate dietitians with this stakeholder event.

## Section 5: Decision on approval process outcomes

### **Assessment panel recommendation**

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the programme should be approved subject to the condition being met.

### **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 programme is approved
- The issues related to quality theme 1 and those identified for referral through this review, should be assessed through the focused review process in a years' time

**Reason for this decision:** The Committee approved the programme, agreeing that a focused review would be the most appropriate approach to confirm sufficient capacity of effective practice-based learning after the first year. This would include appropriate capacity of practice-based learning and an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced practice educators to provide support for learners.

## Appendix 1 – summary report

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

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
University College Birmingham	CAS-01323-R2J1L4	Helen White and Paula Charlesworth	<p>Through this assessment, we have noted:</p> <p>The following is an area of best practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The education provider informed us they had used X (formerly Twitter) to invite recently qualified dietitians from any programme to give feedback on their learning. The education provider held an online discussion to identify changes these graduates would like to have seen about the programme they had studied. The education provider then considered whether this feedback could be incorporated into the development of their programme. The visitors considered the education</li> </ul>	<p>Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities:</p> <p>There are two dietitians who are leading on the development of the programme. The education provider has recruited a full time Programme Lead, one Lecturer – both are registered dietitians - and a part time Placement Lead. Another Lecturer is due to be recruited for February 2024. The wider teaching team includes two nutritionists who are registered with the Association for Nutrition. The education provider uses dietitian visiting lecturers to support the delivery of the programme. The education provider will appoint additional permanent staff as learner numbers increase. A process of</p>

			<p>provider designed an innovative way to gain feedback from graduate dietitians with this stakeholder event.</p> <p>The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners</li> <li>• The number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning</li> </ul>	<p>calculating the staff:student ratio is used to support decision-making for new staff and to ensure quality provision is maintained.</p> <p>The education provider has a variety of facilities to support the programme. Learners will receive hands-on training and experience in the Health Skills and Simulation Suite. This suite includes a ward hospital bay. There is a range of full-size manikins. The home room has an ensuite bathroom. It can also replicate a doctor or nurse consultation room. There is a monitoring suite to record learning and teaching. There is a Food Science and Innovation Suite so learners can create and cook menus. This suite incorporates two kitchens, and other food science facilities. Learners have access to a Kick Start Fund. They receive credit of up to £800 in each year of study to buy programme-related materials.</p>
Programmes				
Programme name			Mode of study	Nature of provision
MSc Dietetics (pre-registration)			Full time	Taught (HEI)



Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2020
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy (Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2020