
Addendum to the 2021-23 Education annual report – 2023-24 academic year findings

Contents

Executive summary	2
Key findings	2
The future.....	3
Approving education providers and programmes	4
Key findings	4
Quality activities, conditions and referrals	5
Reviewing the performance of approved education providers and programmes	8
Key findings	8
Quality activities and referrals	11
Assessment outcomes – review periods	13
Concerns and issues	15
Statistics on process application	15
Data and intelligence	17
Our approach to the use of education provider performance data	17
Engagement with other bodies.....	17
Year in registration survey 2024	17
Continuous improvement.....	19
Future areas of focus.....	21

Executive summary

This report is an addendum to our [annual report for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years](#). It sets out findings from our assessments of education providers and programmes in the 2023-24 academic year, and notes similarities and differences to the previous report. Taken together, the 2021-23 report and this addendum set out a 'state of the nation' for education and training in the 15 professions we regulate for the three academic cycles, from September 2021 to August 2024.

Through this addendum report, we note the key findings from the 2021-23 report, and explore where further findings support our conclusions, and where there are any differences of note.

Key findings

Our key findings from the last report were:

- Quality assurance is central to the work of education providers.
- Education providers actively seek to understand and respond to challenges.
- Partnership working is integral to the delivery of high-quality programmes.
- Education providers are enabling workforce expansion by developing new and existing programmes.
- There were increases in overall programme capacity for most professions.
- Education providers are responding to challenges with practice-based learning capacity.
- Education providers routinely use data to inform decision making.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant and lasting impact on the delivery of education and training.
- There are different approaches and challenges for Higher Education Institution (HEI) and non-HEI education providers.
- Education providers have aligned their programmes with our revised standards of proficiency (SOPs).
- Good forward planning by education providers is required to ensure intended programme start dates can be met.

In this report, we have identified additional key findings as follows:

- Continued challenges with the financial sustainability of education providers and programmes.
- Intended programme learner number capacity is not always filled.
- The pipeline of academic staff is a challenge for education providers, meaning recruiting replacement or additional staff is sometimes difficult.
- 2023-24 was the first time we reviewed most Welsh education providers through our performance review monitoring assessments, following a commissioning exercise for programmes in many of our professions by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) in 2021. From this review, we saw how programmes had continued to align with the expectations of HEIW, and how these expectations helped to drive a focus on quality.
- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) awards¹ were given by the Office for Students (OfS) in 2023, and the work undertaken by education providers to

¹ [TEF 2023 ratings - Office for Students](#)

respond to the TEF was often seen as helpful for them improving the quality of teaching.

- More education providers are considering the use of artificial intelligence within education and training.
- Revisions to programmes triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic have become the 'new normal', and this means the sector should move past relying on the impact of the pandemic in explaining past or current issues.

The future

We have now concluded our first assessment of all HCPC-approved education providers following the introduction of our current quality assurance model in September 2021. This means that all education providers:

- have engaged at least once with our current model;
- are performing as they need to in relation to our education standards; and
- are more familiar with our ongoing requirements, including how to interact with us moving forward in line with the [principles](#) of our model.

The insight these reviews have given us is invaluable. We are now able to confidently state what we have seen, and use this insight to contextualise and set out what we need to understand better to inform judgements through our regulatory assessments. We are also able to reflect this insight back to the sector, and help and guide stakeholders on our requirements linked to the current state of education and training for the professions we regulate.

We continue to be aware of challenges that lie ahead, particularly with:

- financial sustainability;
- learner number expansions continuing at pace for many professions, to meet the needs of the population; and
- diversification of education and training routes, including a marked increase in work-based routes.

We are continuing to play our part in responding to challenges, ensuring we are working as far upstream as possible to ensure public protection. We do this by:

- understanding what is happening in the health and care and education sectors;
- helping our stakeholders understand the current picture of education and training; and
- helping them understand our flexible, non-prescriptive, and outcome-focused standards and requirements, in the contexts within which they operate.

In the current academic year and beyond, we intend to focus on three key areas in our work:

- Working with our stakeholders to consider and reduce regulatory overlap, in keeping with independent regulatory and advisory roles.
- Engaging with our stakeholders well, building on trusted relationships to inform our own insight when undertaking our quality assurance assessments, and to help others to understand what is important to us.
- Embedding proactive reviews of data and insight as fundamental within our work, to inform our view of risk for the education providers we approve.

Approving education providers and programmes

We assess education providers and new programmes to ensure they are properly organised to deliver education, and train learners to be safe, effective and fit to practice.

We focus on whether education providers and programmes meet our standards of education and training (SET). These standards are outcome focused, to ensure those who complete programmes meet our standards of proficiency (which set clear expectations of our registrants’ knowledge and abilities when they start practising) and standards of conduct, performance and ethics (which set out, in general terms, how we expect our registrants to behave).

We undertake two-stage assessments, firstly assessing the institution, and then the programme(s). Where an education provider’s new programme proposal aligns to existing HCPC-approved programmes, we do not ask education providers to evidence institution level standards through approval assessments. We make this judgement by reviewing ‘baseline’ information established by the education provider, against initial information provided through their approval request.

We designed our assessments in this way to reduce burden for education providers, ensuring we consider the context and history of an education provider when deciding how to assess.

Programmes were proposed across three of the four UK nations, and for all professions except clinical scientists, orthoptists, and prosthetists / orthotists.

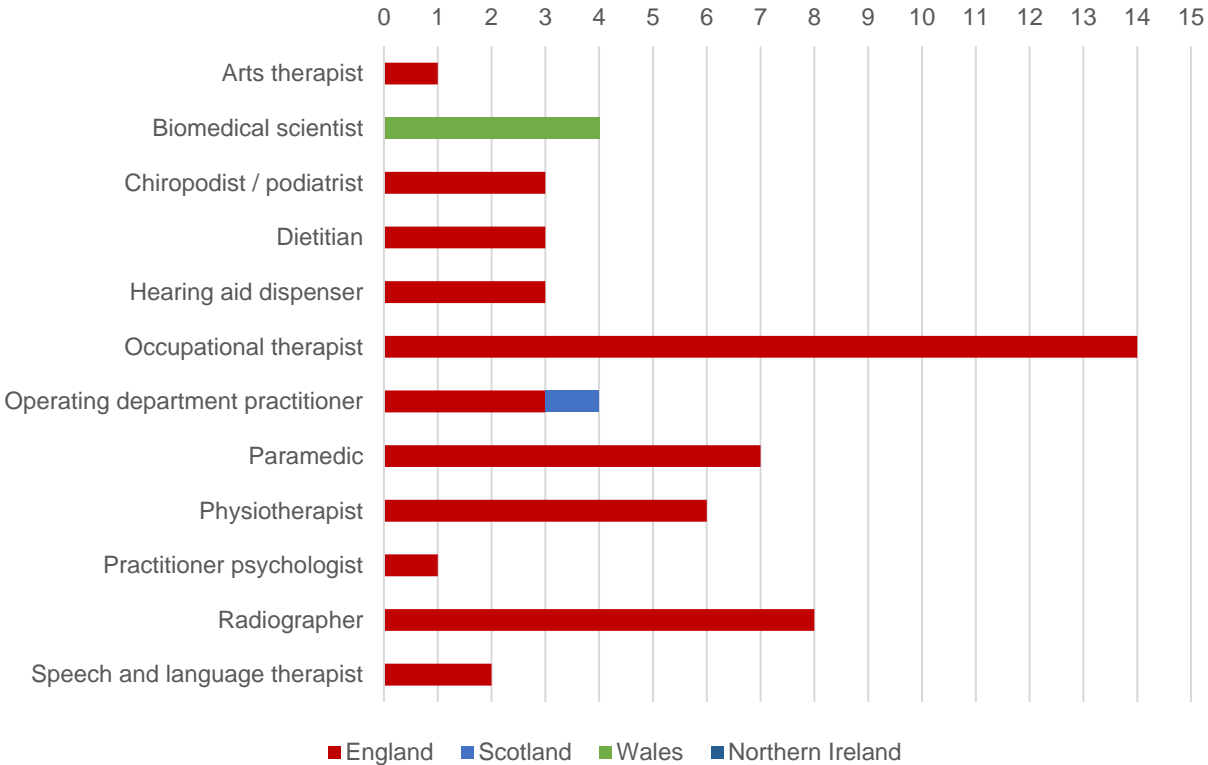


Figure 1 - Programmes considered in 2023-24, by nation and profession

Key findings

The following key findings from the 2021-23 report were supported by findings from the 2023-24 academic year:

- The key challenge for the sector was growth in the total capacity of approved programmes, and the impact of this growth on practice-based learning, and education provider resources (including staffing).
- There were common themes where further development was required by education providers for us to take assurance that our standards were met. Education providers were able to address shortfalls in the following areas, through further development of proposals:
 - **Capacity of practice-based learning** – linked to the bullet point above, recognising challenges within the sector, we tested the intentions to ensure that all learners would be able to undertake practice-based learning to support delivery of learning outcomes.
 - **Collaboration with partner organisations to support delivery of programmes** – considering how education providers were actively collaborating with their partners, both at strategic and operational levels. Commonly, this area included ownership of policies and process (such as learner support), and formal arrangements to manage relationships.
 - **Education providers securing appropriate resources for proposed programmes** – this area included education provider resources (such as physical learning space, and resources to support learning) and staff resources (such as availability of teaching and support staff, and practice educators).
 - **Design and delivery of the curriculum** – this covered a wide range of areas from delivery of the standards of proficiency, to how curricula were designed to integrate theory and practice.

Quality activities, conditions and referrals

During approval assessments we sometimes need to explore in more detail whether or not a proposed programme meets our standards. This can be where there are gaps, or it can be to identify best practice that we can then share with the sector. We call these explorations ‘quality activities’.

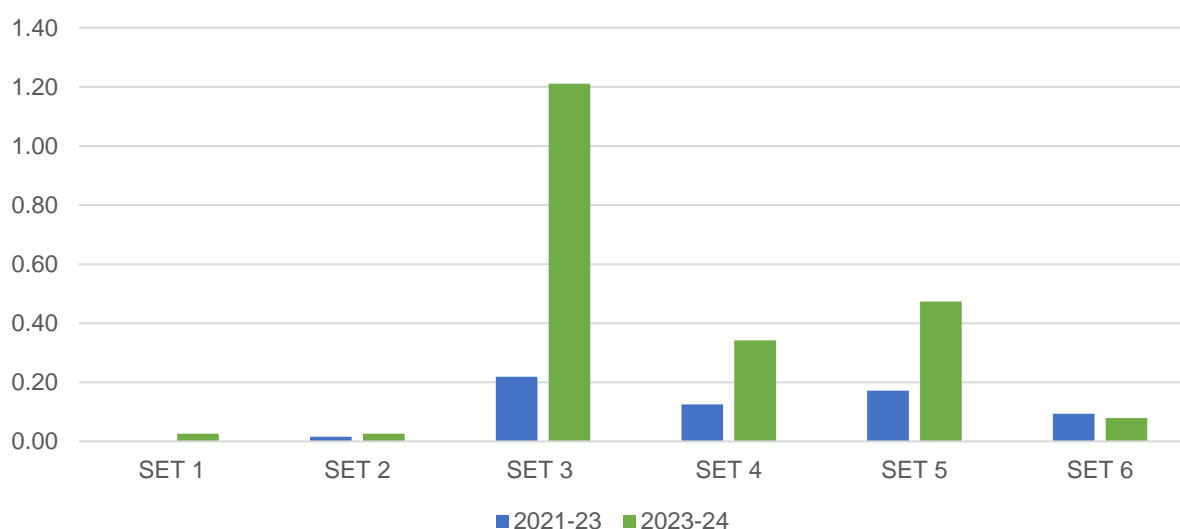


Figure 2 - Average number of quality activities per assessment, by SET area and report period

In 2023-24, we explored more areas on average per assessment than in 2021-23. The most significant differences were in SET 3 (programme governance, management and leadership), SET 5 (practice-based learning), and SET 4 (programme design and

delivery). We explored these areas through quality activities because we were not assured from education providers' initial documentary submissions that relevant standards were met. The increase in the number of areas explored shows that education providers did not understand, or were not unable to articulate how they met our requirements in these areas. From our analysis, there does not appear to be an underlying reason for this linked to different approaches or different types of programmes. Our analysis for 2023-24 shows that the range of models proposed was proportionally consistent to 2021-23. As explored below, the areas that we picked up linked to these SET areas were often the same as in the 2021-23 period.

The main areas we explored through quality themes linked to the following areas of the standards of education and training (SET). This includes findings from 2021-23 which are supported by findings from 2023-24, and additional findings from 2023-24:

- SET 2 – programme admissions
 - Academic and professional entry requirements (new for 2023-24)
- SET 3 – programme governance, management and leadership
 - Collaboration with practice education partners
 - Availability and capacity of practice-based learning
 - Programme staffing and resources
 - Access to resources for learners
 - Use of data to inform decision making (new for 2023-24)
- SET 4 – programme design and delivery
 - Ongoing currency of the curriculum
 - Programme design, including alignment of the programme to our requirements for registration, and integration of theory and practice
 - Management of the availability of artificial intelligence for learners (new for 2023-24)
- SET 5 – practice-based learning
 - Availability and preparedness of practice educators
 - Structure, duration and range of practice-based learning, enabling support of delivering learning outcomes
 - Learner support on practice-based learning (new for 2023-24)
- SET 6 – assessments
 - Assessment design, to ensure learners meet our requirements for registration

In most cases, we were confident with education provider approaches through exploration in quality activities. Where we were not, we set conditions. In 2023-24, conditions set were for one assessment, for which we recommended non-approval. This decision is pending at the time of writing.

In our previous education quality assurance model, we would often have set conditions on approval for these areas, especially when a further documentary submission was required. In the current model, we were able to work with providers further upstream to fix issues before needing to set formal requirements. The low number of conditions set this year is a good demonstration of our ability to take regulatory action early, to ensure our standards are met through assessments.

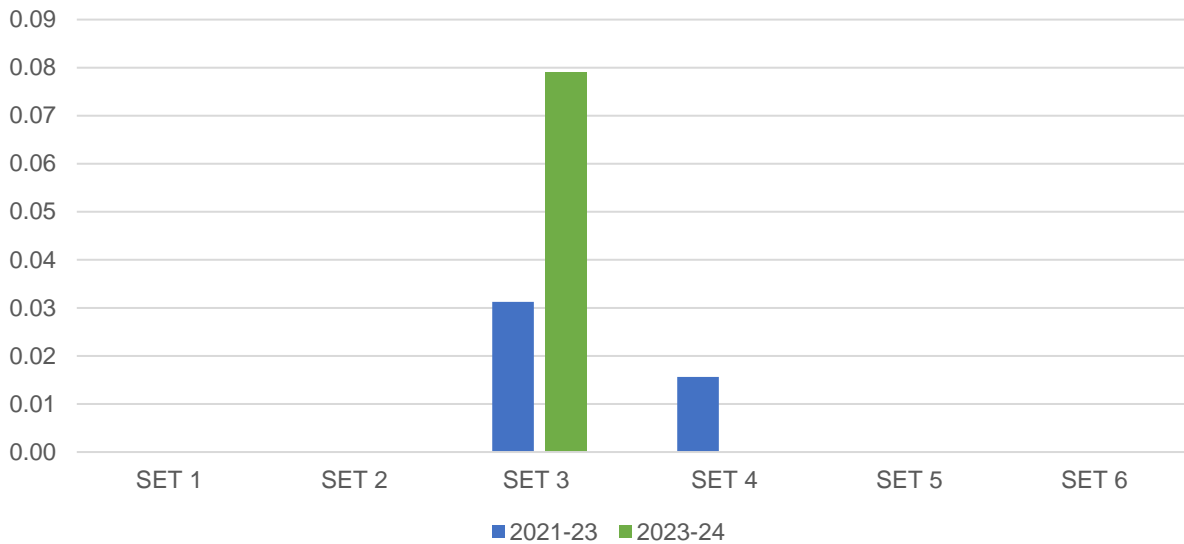


Figure 3 - Average number of referrals per assessment, by SET area and report period

We referred three areas through the approval process to the education provider’s next performance review process. In these cases we were confident that our standards were met at a threshold level, but there were specific areas that we considered important to pick up through future engagement. Due to the small number of referrals, and these being case-specific, there are no themes to note across referrals, although we can see from the chart above that the proportion of assessments with referrals is broadly consistent across the two periods.

Reviewing the performance of approved education providers and programmes

Through performance review assessments, we undertake periodic, proportionate engagement with education providers, to understand their performance and the quality of their provision. Through an assessment, we decide when we next need to engage with the education provider, and set a review period of between 1 and 5 years. This is based on risks, potential issues, and when those might need exploring. As part of this, we will consider significant issues, and where education providers do not meet our standards, we would withdraw approval.

Education providers complete a portfolio covering a set of themes which are linked to our standards, sector developments, and initiatives which may affect the quality of education provision. Where available, we also ask education providers to reflect on performance data points linked to the numbers of learners, learner non-continuation, outcomes for those who complete programmes, and learner satisfaction. These data points give us metrics-based information about how education providers are performing linked to these areas (normally in comparison to a benchmark), and over time whether there are changes in that performance.

We assessed 47 of the 126 HCPC approved education providers in the 2023-24 academic year. In the three academic years since we introduced our current education quality assurance model in September 2021, we have assessed all education providers at least once, which means we can now confidently report on continued alignment with our standards for all education providers.

Key findings

The following key findings from the 2021-23 report were supported by findings from the 2023-24 academic year:

- **Quality assurance focus** – education providers were transparent throughout assessments, openly discussing the problems and challenges they had identified, and what they were doing to resolve such issues. This showed a strong quality assurance and continuous improvement mindset, which is integral to quality assurance and enhancement. Consideration of the quality of programmes was also seen as integral to change and innovation. Education providers with strong centrally managed policies, and common approaches across their provision, were more easily able to reflect as an institution against the thematic portfolio areas.
- **Recognising and understanding challenges** – the sector is outward facing, and aware of challenges from within and outside of the sector, such as cost of living, industrial action, emerging technology, and an aging population. Challenges that directly or indirectly affect delivery of programmes were often well thought through, and flexibly considered in line with established standards and frameworks (such as our education standards). Obligations to external organisations (such as other regulators and professional bodies) are also a key consideration for education providers.
- **Types of education providers and UK nations** – there was a clear split between the approach of higher education institutions (HEIs) and non-HEI education providers. HEIs normally have clear, well utilised, structures (normally

with a level of commonality across education providers), and non-HEIs lack similar structures, or have less ridged structures, with less commonality across education providers. HEIs also have external mechanisms, frameworks, and standards to adhere to, and non-HEIs may not as standard. This meant non-HEIs often needed to work harder to show good performance. There are also differences in influencers and approaches within the UK nations, with education, health and social care being devolved matters across the UK.

- **Partnership working** – strong partnerships are integral to sustainability and quality of programmes. Good partnership working is best underpinned by formal arrangements which clearly defined objectives, expectations, and responsibilities, which are supported by formal engagement procedures.
- **Programme capacity** – education providers considered growth in overall capacity of programmes, and the impact of this growth on practice-based learning, and education provider resources (including staffing). Through performance review assessments, we were able to consider how education provider intentions worked in practice, and could identify where there were challenges which needed more thought and attention from education providers. From our assessments, we were confident that education providers were growing their capacity in a reasonable way, considering the broader sector and external constraints, such as the capacity of practice-based learning.
- **Education provider use of data** – all education providers use data in some way to inform their operations, whether that be learner data to inform learner support, financial data to plan, or other data sources and uses. However, linked to this area, there were problems with feedback fatigue, which impacted internal education provider feedback mechanisms (such as module feedback), and external mechanisms (such as the National Education and Training Survey).
- **COVID-19** – the COVID-19 pandemic was both a challenge to manage, and a catalyst for change and innovation. This theme cut across many of the portfolio areas, and we saw innovation in areas such as delivery of teaching, practice-learning environments, simulation, and learner support.
- **Alignment with our revised standards of proficiency** – all relevant education providers demonstrated alignment with the revised standards of proficiency (SOPs) through reflections on thematic changes to the standards, and showed us how they reviewed their programmes to align with them from September 2023.
- **Shortfalls in education provider approaches** – in some areas, such as interprofessional education, and service user and carer involvement, some education providers were less developed than we would expect. We picked up specifics through assessments, and from these assessments are confident all education providers meet standards in these areas.

Additional findings from 2023-24 assessments:

- There were continued and at times acute issues with financial sustainability, which led some education providers to need to consider their staffing models and other areas linked to resourcing. Despite this, education providers often noted investment in their provision, particularly in physical resources. Some education

providers referenced that international students were a key part of their financial plans, with the higher fees that international students pay.

- There were sometimes problems with education providers recruiting to their intended learner numbers. This shows that workforce development is not just about ensuring capacity numbers increase, but that it is also important to work upstream with potential future professionals, to ensure HCPC professions are seen as attractive career options.
- The recruitment of academic staff continued to be an issue, and education providers recognised their own contributions to developing the pipeline of academic staff.
- There continued to be shortfalls in interprofessional education and service user and carer involvement, which we needed to focus on through assessments. We often needed to consider developing arrangements and plans linked to these areas, and referred to the next scheduled performance review, or in some cases a focused review assessment to enable us to understand how plans would be delivered:
 - Interprofessional education – we explored this area through quality activities for five education providers (about a tenth of education providers) and referred areas to other processes for further assessments for six education providers.
 - Service user and carer involvement – we explored this area through quality activities for nine education providers (about a fifth of education providers) and referred areas to other processes for further assessments for eight education providers.
- We reviewed five HEIs in Wales in this academic year. A lot of health professional training² was recommissioned by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) in 2021, and we reviewed this provision in the 2021-22 academic year through the approval or focused review process. We decided to review all Welsh education providers affected by the commissioning exercise through performance review in the 2023-24 academic year. This enabled education providers to embed their new or changed programmes, and undertake good reflection on the performance of those programmes. We noted the following points for these education providers:
 - Commissioning arrangements with HEIW were central to the continued financial sustainability of relevant programmes.
 - HEIW were a key partner when developing provision, and education providers needed to report metrics and other information to HEIW, linked to quality (including in practice-based learning).
 - There is an All-Wales Placement Reference Group, which is overseen by HEIW, which enables national practice-based learning allocations.
 - The Reference Group also includes a set of pledges co-produced by education providers to help empower positive learning experiences in practice-based learning.
 - HEIW requires that interprofessional education (IPE) contributes to 20% of the curriculum, as part of their commissioning arrangements.
 - The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (Medr) replaced the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) in August 2024,

² HCPC professions commissioned were biomedical scientists, chiropractors / podiatrists, dietetics, hearing aid dispensers, occupational therapy, operating department practice, paramedics, physiotherapy, radiography, and speech and language therapy

and is now responsible for regulating institutions, and funding for higher education (amongst other areas)³ in Wales.

- The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is an English “scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) that aims to encourage higher education providers to improve and deliver excellence in the areas that students care about the most: teaching, learning and achieving positive outcomes from their studies”⁴. TEF awards were given in 2023, and several education providers reflected on how their TEF submission had helped them to drive improvements in teaching.
- More education providers explicitly drew out how they are managing increased access to artificial intelligence for learners, particularly how they uphold academic integrity, and support staff and learners in this area.
- Revisions to programmes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as blended delivery approaches, are now embedded into programmes, and we will no longer ask education providers to reflect on this area moving forwards.

Quality activities and referrals

During performance review assessments, we sometimes need to explore areas in more detail to consider education provider performance. These can be where there are gaps, or to identify best practice that we can then share with the sector. We call these explorations ‘quality activities’.

The following table presents the number of quality themes and referrals linked to each portfolio area, and is provided to show changes to the areas that we needed to explore further with education providers through our assessments.

³ [Home - Medr](#)

⁴ [About the Teaching Excellence Framework \(TEF\) - Office for Students](#)

Portfolio area	Quality activities		Referred to performance review		Referred to focused review	
	2021-23	2023-24	2021-23	2023-24	2021-23	2023-24
Resourcing, including financial stability	24%	17%	8%	4%	1%	2%
Partnerships with other organisations	20%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Academic and placement quality (2021-23 only)	22%	N/A	8%	N/A	2%	N/A
Academic quality (2023-24 only)	N/A	15%	N/A	2%	N/A	0%
Placement quality (2023-24 only)	N/A	13%	N/A	2%	N/A	0%
Interprofessional education	18%	11%	5%	13%	0%	0%
Service users and carers	27%	19%	16%	13%	0%	4%
Equality and diversity	20%	0%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Horizon scanning	19%	4%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Embedding the revised HCPC standards of proficiency (SOPs)	9%	19%	0%	4%	0%	2%
Impact of COVID-19 (2021-23) / Learning and developments from the COVID-19 pandemic (2023-24)	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods	13%	4%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Apprenticeships In England	9%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies (2021-23 only)	10%	N/A	1%	N/A	0%	N/A
Office for Students (OfS)	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Performance of newly commissioned provision in Wales (2023-24 only)	N/A	0%	N/A	0%	N/A	0%
Other professional regulators / professional bodies	5%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Curriculum development	15%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%
Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level)	19%	9%	3%	4%	0%	0%
Learners	19%	4%	1%	4%	0%	0%
Practice placement educators	12%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
External examiners	8%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Data	0%	4%	3%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 4 - proportion of quality activities and referrals for assessments, by report period

For the 2023-24 academic year, the areas most often referred to other processes were:

- service user and carer involvement (8 referrals) – we require that service users and carers are involved in programmes in some way, and usually referred this area when involvement was under development or changing;
- interprofessional education (6 referrals) – we require that learners are able to learn with, and from, learners and professional in other relevant professions, and normally referred this area when approaches were underdeveloped or changing; and
- resourcing, including financial stability (3 referrals) – we require that programmes are sustainable and fit for purpose, to enable all learners on programmes to complete their education and training, and usually referred this area when there were changes in resource modelling or increases in learner numbers.

In the previous report, we found that areas linked to academic and placement quality were referred nine times. For 2023-24 portfolios, we split this area into two distinct areas (academic quality and placement quality), which enabled more focused reflection by education providers on each distinct area. The previous finding of nine referrals was not mirrored this year, which may be influenced by the split in the portfolio enabling more focused reflection.

Assessment outcomes – review periods

When defining the review period of between one and five years, we consider the following:

- Stakeholder engagement – how the education provider engages with their stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement – how the education provider engages with professional bodies, and other relevant organisations, and how they consider sector and professional development in a structured way.
- Data supply – whether data for the education provider is available through external sources, or if they have established a regular data supply.
- What data is telling us, and how the education provider considers data in their quality assurance processes.
- If there are any specific development(s) or risk(s) that will impact at a specific time.

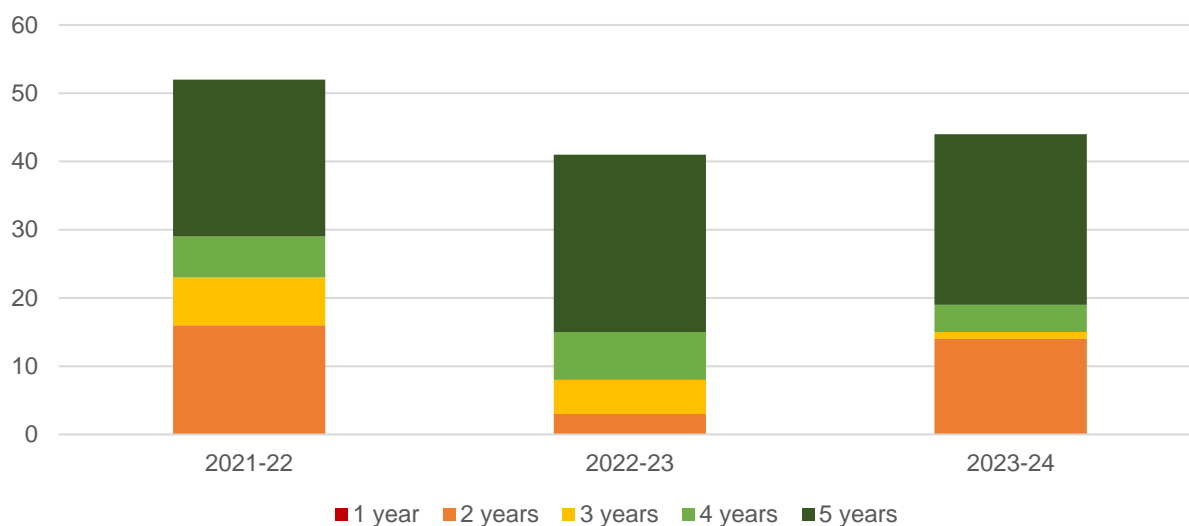


Figure 5 - Performance review assessment review period decisions - by academic year

In 2023-24, we set two-year review periods for a higher number of education providers when compared to 2023-24. This is due to education providers who received a two-year review period in the 2021-22 academic year being reviewed again in 2023-24. Most of these education providers are not included in external data returns, and did not establish mechanisms to supply us with equivalent data through their performance review assessment, meaning the maximum review period we could set was two years.

For education providers included in external data returns, review periods were set at five years for 63% of education providers. We set this review period when:

- The education provider was high performing, from a data, intelligence and based on the findings from our review;
- Any immediate issues raised through assessments were dealt with by the education provider; and
- Any remaining issues did not need to be addressed before a five-year review period.

Reasons for setting shorter review periods were normally due to:

- A significant change planned by the education provider which might impact on a range of our standards, which we considered needs reviewing along a shortened period to ensure any risks associated with changes were properly managed; and / or
- Low data scores, to ensure actions defined by education providers were progressed to manage risks.

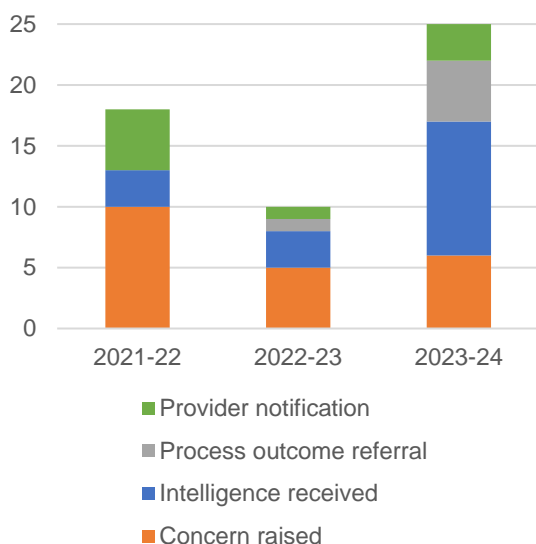
Concerns and issues

We listen to concerns and issues raised to us by external parties, and are able to identify potential issues and concerns ourselves from the data and intelligence we receive. We consider concerns that might impact how our standards of education and training (SETs) are met, which in turn may affect learners meeting our requirements for registration.

In these situations, we undertake ‘focused review’ assessments, which are focused on the specific concerns raised and whether they could impact on our standards. Through these assessments, we consider the concern itself, ask the education provider for a written response, and will follow up any areas required through quality activities. We will then come to a judgement about whether any further action is required, which can include us setting specific regulatory requirements, or in cases where our standards are no longer met by education providers or programmes, withdraw approval.

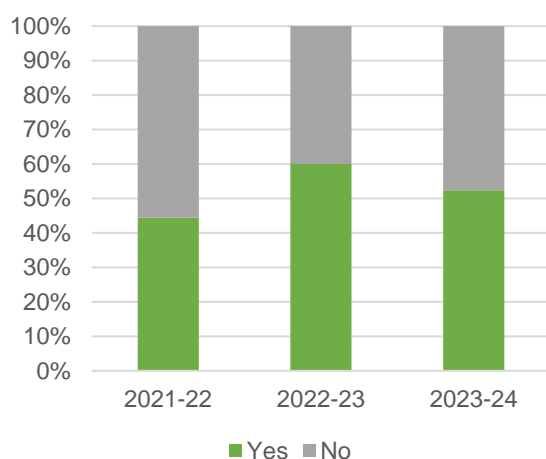
Statistics on process application

Source of process trigger



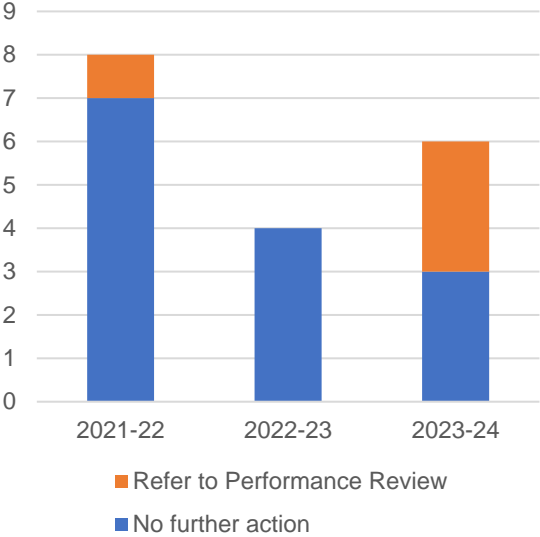
- We trigger focused review assessments from a range of sources, including referrals from our own assessments.
- In the 2023-24 academic year, the highest proportion of triggers were from us receiving intelligence, which is change from the previous report, where the highest proportion was concerns raised – normally these concerns were from learners.
- This change is linked to us establishing new acceptance criteria for learner concerns, which we have applied from September 2023 – this means that we did not normally consider concerns raised when the contact had not followed education providers concerns or complaints policies.

Triage decision – full review required



- When an assessment is triggered, we undertake a triage decision against our standards of acceptance.
- We aim to ensure that our resources are used well, to investigate areas that might impact on our standards being met by education providers and / or programmes.
- In line with previous years, we fully investigated about half of the concerns raised to us.

Review outcomes



- In 2023-24 we referred a higher number of focused review cases to the performance review process.
- This is a standard outcome for focused review assessment, and is used when we consider an area of concern has been addressed at this time, but when we would like to keep the concern in mind for future reviews.

Data and intelligence

Our approach to the use of education provider performance data

One of the pillars of our quality assurance model is using data and intelligence to inform our regulatory decision making. Using data and intelligence allows us to be:

- Proactive – where data and intelligence identifies risks, we can trigger some form of engagement with education providers;
- Risk-based – have an evidence-based understand of risks for education providers; and
- Proportionate – use risk profiling to undertake bespoke and right touch regulatory interventions.

The use of education provider performance data has continued to add value through to our assessments. We set up education providers to reflect on data points, and our partners to consider data through assessments, including comparison to benchmarks and trend analysis for each data point. Data helps us to explore specific areas with education providers through our quality activities in our assessments, and to take assurance where performance data metrics are at or above benchmarks.

Engagement with other bodies

We have continued to become a more active partner in the sector in 2023-24, with the aim to understand the sector to contextualise our assessments. Our professional body / HCPC education forum group has continued to meet, to share information to support and assure high quality education and training in the HCPC-regulated professions. There are 22 professional body members of this group, and we have good attendance at regular meetings, with a standard agenda that covers developments and challenges facing education provision for the professions we regulate.

We have shared and received information with professional bodies and commissioning organisations, which has informed our assessments. Normally, this enables us to contextualise assessments (for example, where a body provides information about shortages of practice-based learning in a nation or region), and ensure we are evidence informed to the situation when making judgements against our standards. We have established formal information sharing arrangements with five professional bodies, and are working with several others, to enable more structured and consistent information sharing through our assessments.

Year in registration survey 2024

We run a yearly survey to seek the views of those who have been HCPC-registered for one year. This survey focuses on respondents' education and training programme, how this prepared them to practice, and their first year in employment. We integrate insight from results into our education quality assurance activities, and inform focus areas for our Policy and Standards, and Professionalism and Upstream Regulation teams. For example, we used findings linked to interprofessional education and service user involvement in the academic setting to inform the questions we asked of education providers through their performance review portfolio submissions.

We most recently undertook this exercise in the summer of 2024. Over 2,000 individuals responded to this survey, across all professions and nations / regions.

In the most recent survey, agree responses significantly outweighed disagree responses for all questions, which is a positive finding. Results for education and training preparing learners for practice were particularly positive, with 5% or less of respondents disagreeing with each statement.

Consistently with the last three surveys, too many respondents noted they had no interprofessional education within their academic learning (which links to SET 4.9), and that service user involvement was not visible / embedded within their programmes (linking to SET 3.7). We have developed our ask through performance review portfolios in line with these responses, and this links to the problems reported in the [performance review section](#) of this report, meaning there is still work to be done on these two areas with education providers.

In the 2024 survey, we noted that:

- Programme and staff interaction was an area where we saw lower agreement rates to statements.
- Feedback on academic work being timely and helpful were also statements more frequently disagreed with.

We consider that the above could be linked to education providers considering their staffing arrangements, and the challenges in recruiting new academic staff, which has at times led to reducing staff numbers.

Respondents remained likely to recommend their programme to a friend or family member (74% in 2024 compared to 76% in 2023), and the percentage of those who would not recommend their programme was maintained at 11%. Although the data shows this has remained consistent, this may be a concerning finding for our sector partners when considering workforce planning.

Continuous improvement

Our education quality assurance model does not stand still. Continuous improvement is embedded into the way we work, with internal structures in place to inform areas where we should improve.

In 2023-24, we have:

- Added the following areas to performance review portfolios, to enable a better understanding of education provider performance linked to our standards:
 - Admissions – enables education providers to reflect on how their admissions policies and processes have developed.
 - Learner support – enables education providers to reflect on how their learner support policies and processes have developed.
 - Staff and practice educator development – enables education providers to reflect on how mechanisms for staff development have developed.
 - Impact of workforce planning – enables education providers to specifically reflect on the impact of workforce planning, as relevant to plans within the four UK nations. This was often covered within the ‘resourcing, including financial stability’ section, but not all education providers specifically reflected on workforce plans, so we decided to draw this out into a separate portfolio area.
 - Revised HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics – enables education providers to demonstrate how they have embedded the revised standards within their programmes for learners commencing from September 2024.
 - Learner safety in paramedic practice-based learning environments – enables reflection by paramedic education providers about learner safety in practice-based learning environments, considering the evidence available which shows this is an issue particularly prevalent in paramedic practice-based learning environments.
 - Strategic approach to gathering feedback – we have always captured feedback from specific groups. Adding this area enables education providers to reflect on how their approach to gathering, analysing, and acting on feedback has developed.
 - Strategic approach to using data to inform quality – we have always used available data points, asked education providers to supply specific data, and asked education providers to reflect on this data through their portfolios. Adding this area enables education providers to reflect on how their use of data has developed, to inform quality.
- Included a contact updates form in the performance review portfolio, to ensure our records are up to date for contacts at education providers and programmes.
- Developed [information](#) for education providers who are not included in external data returns, to enable them to establish regular reporting of data to us. This will enable education providers to increase their monitoring period from the current two year ceiling applied to education providers who are not in data returns.
- Produced a clear statement defining which non-UK based programmes we can and cannot consider for approval.
- Further developed internal quality assurance measures, specifically additional monthly checks based on clear metrics, to improve our assessment processes and the application of those processes.
- Added process steps so we ensure we have a current record of the education provider ‘baseline’ (a description of how they meet institution level standards).

- Developed data capture for programmes to include the 'model of learning', to enable proactive analysis of trends.

Future areas of focus

We continue to focus on the areas noted in the previous report, as follows:

- Workforce expansion – within 2023-24, we produced [information for education providers](#), to help them understand our regulatory approach, and to share insight about our [approval of apprenticeship programmes](#). We are continuing to engage with the sector to help with workforce expansion, in keeping with our regulatory role.
- Implementation of our revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics – within 2023-24, we communicated our requirements with education providers, namely that they needed to review their programmes to deliver the revised standards to new cohorts from September 2024. We will assess alignment with the revised standards through our performance review assessments, and will be able to report on this area in our next annual report.
- Review of our standards of education and training – we have now commenced this review, and have begun work with stakeholders to define changes needed. This is a multi-year piece of work, and we will decide when education providers need to meet the revised standards as a part of our activities. This will depend on how substantial changes are, to enable education providers to work to meeting revised standards in a reasonable timeframe.

We have concluded the final year of performance review assessments, from our three year programme of assessments following the introduction of our current quality assurance model in September 2021. Findings from the final year of reviews are included in this report (and the performance review section of appendix 2). We now move into business as usual with performance review assessments, and will undertake these reviews based on the periods established with each education provider through the initial programme of assessment.

We have identified the following additional areas that we will focus on in the coming years:

- Proactive review of education provider performance data – moving out of the three year period post model implementation, we will now focus on proactively reviewing external education provider performance data at the point of supply. This will enable us to pick up potential problems within the data, and work with education providers where there may be issues with their performance.
- National / regional engagement refresh – as above, moving out of the three-year period post model implementation, we now have the opportunity to focus on better engagement with education providers and other stakeholders within each nation and English region. This will enable us to fulfil our commitments to be a good partner in the sector, to continue to build trusted relationships to undertake more effective quality assurance.
- Reducing regulatory overlap – we are considering how we can further reduce areas of regulatory overlap, linked to our operating model and across the education sector. Our aim is to continue to make good independent regulatory decisions, whilst considering the work of others to reduce burden for education providers. We have started working with other regulators and professional bodies, aiming to be a leader in the sector to understand the appetite for further reducing regulatory overlap and burden. There is a drive for this in the sector currently, with the Council of Deans of Health (CoDoH) calling for reducing regulatory overlap in their manifesto work for the 2024 general election.

- Artificial intelligence in education – We recognise education providers are currently grappling with the challenges and opportunities presented by developments in technology such as artificial intelligence (AI). We have produced a [document](#) to help education providers consider this area, aligning to our regulatory standards and requirements, and signpost to resources produced by other organisations. We will consider how education providers are responding to this area through performance reviews from the 2024-25 academic year onwards, and will be able to report on this in the next annual report.
- Paramedic practice-based learning – Within the paramedic education sector, expectations about the range of practice-based learning for paramedic pre-registration programmes have evolved over time, meaning that most organisations now expect some form of non-ambulance practice-based learning. When developing our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics, we introduced new requirements, and some existing standards that were unchanged can be understood differently, due to the range of settings in which a paramedic can now practice. With other organisations taking a clearer position on their expectations for non-ambulance experience in paramedic education and training programmes, we decided to review this area, and come to a clear position on the subject. We have produced [advice](#) on this area, and will require reflections through our regular performance review monitoring process from the 2025-26 academic year.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion developments – we are undertaking work to clearly define normal and good practice for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practices in education for our regulated professions, linked to our standards of education and training (SETs). This will enable consistent judgements to be made about education provider / programme compliance with the SETs linked to EDI. The outcomes of this work will also feed into our SETs review for any required development linked to EDI across the SETs.
- Staffing changes at education providers – we have produced [information](#) for education providers considering changes to their staffing, due to financial pressures within the education sector. We have asked education providers to consider our standards of education and training when considering changes to staffing. We will ask questions linked to this area through engagement with our regular performance review monitoring assessments, and will be able to report on this area further in the next report.