

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Central Lancashire
Name of programme	MSc Occupational Therapy, Full time accelerated MSc Physiotherapy, Full time accelerated
Approval visit date	19 September 2017
Case reference	CAS-11895-F3F1S3

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Executive Summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title ‘occupational therapist’ or ‘physiotherapist’ must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors’ report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the approval of the programme at the education provider. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 07/12/2017. At this meeting, the Committee approved the ongoing approval the programme. This means that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards. Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

How we make our decisions

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

The ETC make 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 meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Laura Graham	Occupational therapist
Joanna Jackson	Physiotherapist
Louise Whittle	Lay
Tamara Wasylec	HCPC executive
Shaista Ahmad	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Louisa Jones	Independent chair	University of Central Lancashire
Carl Nuttall	Secretary	University of Central Lancashire
Nicola Spalding	External adviser	University of East Anglia
Wendy Harrison	External adviser	Royal Lancaster infirmary
Simon Rouse	External adviser and Reviewer (Dual role)	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Sally Gosling	Reviewer	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Joan Healey	Reviewer	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Sally Feaver	Reviewer	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Clair Parkin	Reviewer	Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Occupational therapist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum student cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01704

Programme name	MSc Physiotherapy
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Physiotherapist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum student cohort	Up to 20 (Up to 50 across all three physiotherapy programmes)
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01705

We undertook this assessment of two new programmes proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programmes meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted	Reason(s) for non-submission
Programme specification	Yes	
Module descriptor(s)	Yes	
Handbook for learners	Yes	
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes	
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes	
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes	
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	No	The programmes are new; therefore, they do not have associated external examiner's reports yet.

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	The programmes are both new so we met with learners from the existing BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy programme.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers and educators	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that 36 of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 15 November 2017.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that appropriate information about the programmes is provided to potential applicants, allowing them to make an informed decision about taking up a place on a programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team that information about what was required of applicants before they could take up a place on the programme was not clearly contained in the information provided to learners, prior to application. This includes information such as:

- passing an enhanced criminal convictions check;
- passing an occupational health check;
- clarity about whether learner membership of professional bodies is required; and
- potential costs to learners, including travel costs.

The visitors were also unclear as to what the admissions process is and how learners are made aware of it. For instance, how prospective applicants would know the process for obtaining criminal convictions check, what learners are required to provide and whether they would be required to pay for the check. The visitors noted from programme documentation and discussions with the programme team that information about potential costs to learners on this programme is communicated in the course handbook, which is accessible from a link on the programme website, and at the welcome week after the start of the programme. However, the visitors could not see the information about potential costs within the course handbook. The visitors considered that, from the evidence provided, the timing of the provision of the information could impact on the ability of applicants to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence as to what information is provided to applicants and at what points in the application process this information would be provided. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine how the education provider ensures that applicants have all the information they require in order to make informed decisions about taking up a place on the programme.

2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider is required to provide further evidence to demonstrate what health requirements learners are expected to meet, how they are appropriate for the occupational therapy programme, and how learners are told about these requirements.

Reason: The visitors noted from the occupational therapy programme documentation and discussions with the programme team that information about what was required of applicants, was not clearly contained in the information provided to learners, prior to application. The information regarding “the occupational health process” is contained within the Work Based Learning Team (WBLT) web site. However, the visitors could not determine how applicants would be made aware of what they are required to do in order to meet the programmes’ health requirements in the admissions process. The visitors were also unclear of the admissions process relating to health requirements and how this is communicated to applicants. For instance, how prospective applicants would know:

- the process for meeting any health requirements;
- what they are required to provide; and
- whether they would incur any costs.

As such, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates what the admission process is with regards to any health requirements and how this is provided to learners, prior to application, so that they can make an informed decision about taking up a place on the programme. In this way, the visitors can determine if this standard is met.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice education providers.

Reason: In discussion with the practice educators, the visitor heard that the introduction of new online documentation for use by practice educators were not made aware of how to use the document prior to working with learners. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors also heard that the Work Based Learning Team (WBLT) website, was launched eight weeks prior to the approval visit; however, the learners and practice educators were unaware of the site and the information contained within. In discussions with the placement providers, the visitors heard that some of the practice based learning details were no longer accurate as the placement directory held information about placements that no longer exist or had changed names. In addition, the visitors heard that learners had been given names of practice educators who had left the practice-based setting. As such, the visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms for regular collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers, which ensures that both parties communicate accurate and pertinent information effectively and in a timely manner.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates the effective process by which they ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the Work Based Learning Team (WBLT) website, was launched eight weeks prior to the approval visit and that this resource is used to ensure that there is availability and capacity at the practice-based learning settings. However, the learners and practice educators were unaware of the website and the information contained within. In discussions with the placement providers, the visitors heard that some of the practice based learning details were no longer accurate as the “placement directory” held information about placements that no longer exist. As such, the visitors were unable to see how the education provider ensures that there are sufficient practice-based learning opportunities available for all learners. Consequently, the visitors require further evidence of the effective process used by the education provider, which ensures that there are enough practice-based learning opportunities available, in all settings, for all learners on the programme. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver the physiotherapy programme.

Reason: In a review of the documentation and in discussions with the programme and senior teams, the visitors heard that two new posts are to be recruited to for this programme. However, the visitors were not able to ascertain what the education provider required with regards to the newly recruited team members qualifications and experiences and how this relates to the curriculum taught on this programme. As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate the education provider’s plan to support the delivery of the programme ensures that two new staff members will be sufficient. The visitors also require information as to how the required experience and

qualification profile of the new staff members will complement the team to ensure they can support the delivery of the breadth of knowledge taught on this programme.

3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that, subject areas will be taught by staff with the specialist expertise and knowledge.

Reason: In a review of the documentation and in discussions with the programme and senior teams, the visitors heard that two new posts are to be recruited for the physiotherapy programme. However, the visitors were not able to ascertain what the education provider's requirement is with regards to the newly recruited team members' qualifications and experiences and how this relates to the curriculum taught on this programme. As such, the visitors require further evidence of the education provider's rationale about how they intend to support the delivery of the programme and how the two new staff members will support this. The visitors also heard that education provider plans to recruit new staff to the occupational therapy programme to ensure adequate breadth of knowledge of experience within the staff team, particularly with regards to the subject of mental health. As such, the visitors require information as to how the required experience and qualification profile of the new staff members will complement the staff teams to ensure they can support the delivery of the breadth of knowledge taught on this programme.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the resources to support learning in all settings effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: At the visit, the visitors accessed the work based learning team (WBLT) website. The visitors saw the information contained on the website regarding practice based learning locations was outdated, as confirmed by the practice providers. Although the visitors understood that the learners have access to pertinent programme information through this website, they could not see how learners would have access to information that is current and accurate. Additionally, the practice educators and learners were not aware of the website. Therefore, the visitors were unable to see how this resource is kept up to date and accurate so that it supports learning in all settings. The visitors therefore require the education provider to review the WBLT website to ensure that the information contained within the site remains current and supports learning so they can determine if the resources are effectively used.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show in which modules learning outcomes can be achieved that ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for physiotherapists.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the module descriptors for this standard. In review of the module descriptors, the visitors could not determine the module specific aims of each module. For instance, SOP 14.18 is mapped to the following module Integrated Physiotherapy Practice 2 and the content includes pain assessment and measurements and electrophysical agents. However, the visitors noted that the learning outcomes do not reflect the requirement of SOP 14.18, where learners must be able to be able to select and apply safe and effective electrotherapeutic modalities. The visitors noted that this is just one example of how they were unable to see how the learning outcomes ensure learners meet the SOPs across the programme and in which modules the learning outcomes are situated. As such, the visitors could not ascertain how the learning outcomes for the modules ensure that the learners meet the standards of proficient for physiotherapists, as they were unable to see how the learning outcomes relate to the standards of proficiency. Consequently, the visitors require further evidence to show how the learning outcomes ensure that learners meet all of the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists to determine whether this standard is met.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how learners on the physiotherapy programme, are able to learn with, and from, professional and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: In discussions with the senior team, the visitors heard that the interprofessional education strategy is due to be reviewed in November 2017 with a focus on how to embed IPE in the curriculum.. The programme team told the visitors that interprofessional education will be a part of the programme. As the review has not yet been completed and the programme team do not know how they will implement IPE, the visitors were unable to determine if this standard is met from the evidence provided. As such, the visitors require further evidence of the education provider's plans to deliver interprofessional education including where in the programme IPE is delivered and how it is delivered before they can determine if the programme meets this standard.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: In review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that there is a practice-based learning audit process in place. In discussions with both the learners and the practice educators, the visitors heard that, on a few occasions, no notice was given to state with whom they would be working. Also, the visitors heard that learners had been given names of people who had left the practice-based setting. Therefore, the visitors cannot see how the education provider can ensure that the learner is working with approved practice educators. Additionally, visitors heard that practice-based learning representatives attend updates and are expected to disseminate information to practice educators. However, the visitors could not see how the education provider ensures that practice educators have received the relevant updates, such as new documentation or new training. As such, the visitors were unable to see how the process for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning is thorough and effective. As such, they require further evidence to

demonstrate that there is an effective and thorough system in place for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning including details of how this is maintained.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

Reason: In review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that there is a practice-based learning audit process in place. The process aims to ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning. In discussions with both the learners and the practice educators, the visitors heard that learners had been given names of individuals who had left the practice-based setting. Consequently, the learner had been matched with someone who no longer worked at the practice-based setting. Therefore, the visitors could not see how the education provider maintains a current overview of how many qualified and experienced staff there are at practice-based learning settings. As such, the visitors require information to show how the education provider maintains updated information regarding the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning for these programmes to ensure that the provision is adequate.

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 must provide further evidence demonstrating how they ensure practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.

Reason: In review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that there is a practice-based learning audit process in place. This process aims to ensure that practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learners. In discussions with both the learners and the practice educators, the visitors heard that learners had been given names of individuals who had left the practice-based setting, and that some practice-based learning providers had changed their name. Consequently, learners had been paired with someone that no longer worked at the practice-based setting. Therefore, the visitors could not see how the process by which the education provider ensures that each practice educator has the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning is effective. As such, the visitors require information to show how the education provider maintains updated information regarding which staff have the relevant knowledge skills and experience to work with learners on these programmes.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence demonstrating how they ensure practice educators undertake regular training appropriate to the programme.

Reason: The visitors heard that the education provider expects all practice educators for the programme to engage in a two-day training provided by the education provider, prior to working with learners. The visitors also understood that practice educators attend "updates" to their training on a yearly basis. However, the visitors were unclear on how the training is appropriate for the role, learner's needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes. The visitors also heard that practice based learning representatives attend "updates" and disseminate that information to the practice educators in the relevant settings. In discussion with the practice educators, the visitor heard that NHS trusts organise training and invite the education provider to attend. From the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to how the two-day training and the updates prepare practice educators for their role in the programme, whether all practice educators attend the same training or how they ensure that all practice educators have undertaken appropriate training. As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that all practice educators undertake the appropriate training. The education provider should also provide details of how the training it is appropriate for the practice educator role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the mechanisms by which they communicate information that learners and practice educators need in order for them to prepare for practice-based learning in a timely manner.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation and met with the practice educators. In discussion with the practice educators, the visitors heard that practice educators were not made aware of how to use the new online documentation prior to working with learners. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the Work Based Learning Team (WBLT) website contains the information learners and practice educators require to prepare them for practice-based learning, however, the learners and practice educators were unaware of the site and the information contained within. In discussions with the placement providers, the visitors heard that some of the practice based learning details were no longer accurate as the placement directory held information about practice-based learning settings that no longer existed or had different names. In addition, the visitors heard that learners had been given names of practice educators who had left the practice-based setting. As such, the visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms used by the education provider to ensure that practice education providers and learners have the information they need in a timely manner in order to prepare for practice-based learning.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence that the assessment strategy and design ensures that those who successfully complete the physiotherapy programme meet the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists.

Reason: This condition relates to the condition on SET 4.1. The visitors read the module descriptors and discussed assessments with the programme team. In review of the module descriptors, the visitors could not determine the module specific aims of each module. For instance, SOP 14.18 is mapped to the following module Integrated Physiotherapy Practice 2 and the content includes pain assessment and measurements and electrophysical agents. However, the visitors noted that the learning outcomes do not reflect the requirement of SOP 14.18, where learners must be able to be able to select and apply safe and effective electrotherapeutic modalities. The visitors noted that this is just one example to demonstrate how they were unable to see how the assessment strategy and design ensures that learners meet the SOPs. As such, the visitors could not ascertain how assessment strategy and design for the programme ensures that the learners meet the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists. Consequently, the visitors could not see how the assessment strategy and design ensures that learners meet all of the SOPs before completing the programme. As such, the visitors require further evidence to show how the assessments ensure that learners are able to meet the SOPs to determine whether this standard is met.

6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information to show that the assessment methods used on the physiotherapy programme are appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.

Reason: This condition relates to conditions 4.1 and 6.1. The visitors read the module descriptors and discussed assessments with the programme team. In review of the module descriptors, the visitors could not determine the module specific aims of each module. The visitors also could not see what assessment methods are used to measure the learning outcomes, which relate to the SOPs. As such, the visitors require further evidence to show what assessment methods are used to measure the learning outcomes and how they are appropriate and effective at measuring the learning outcomes to ensure that the SOPs can be met. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider considers reviewing the accessibility of the virtual learning environment to ensure ease of access.

Reason: The visitors accessed the virtual learning environment and agreed that the site could be used on a personal computer or laptop. However, they had some difficulty accessing links via the tablet and phone versions of the site. As such, the visitors recommend the education provider consider reviewing the website so that it is accessible by phone and tablet.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 07 December 2017 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).