Approval process report

University of Salford, Occupational Therapy / Occupational Therapy (Degree apprenticeship), 2025-26

Executive Summary

This is a report of the ongoing process to approve the following programmes at the University of Salford.

- BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Degree Apprenticeship
- BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Extended Route

This report captures the process we have undertaken to date to assess the institution and programme against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme are fit to practice.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area. There were certain areas that we needed to explore further, and we determined that requesting additional information through stage 2 was the most appropriate way to do this. We describe the areas where we requested more information, and explain the reasoning for this decision, in section 2.
- Reviewed the programmes against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programmes should be approved
- Decided all standards are met, and that the programme is approved

Through this assessment, we have noted the programmes meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	N / A as this case did not arise from a previous case.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • whether the [institution and] programme(s) is / are approved, and

- when the provider's first engagement with the performance review process should be
- whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how

Next steps   Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:
- Subject to the Panel's decision, the programme will be added to the list of approved programmes.
- The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year.

Included within this report

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 detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme 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:

Jennifer Caldwell	Lead visitor, Occupational therapy
Joanne Stead	Lead visitor, Occupational therapy
Niall Gooch	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers thirteen HCPC-approved programmes across five professions and including three Postgraduate Independent and Supplementary Prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1992.

The two proposed new programmes are both degree apprenticeships. There is existing apprenticeship provision at the education provider – the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship, which has run since 2020.

The proposed new programmes sit within the School of Health and Society.

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 2 of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Chiropodist / podiatrist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1993
	Occupational therapy	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1994
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	1999
	Prosthetist / Orthotist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	1998
	Radiographer	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	1992
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2009

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

Learner number capacity	899	949	2025	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.

The two proposed programmes are each intended to have a cohort size of 25, so the overall learner increase is 50. However, the education provider has noted to us, specifically regarding the apprenticeship, that it will not add to the overall numbers of occupational therapy learners at the institution because the learner numbers will come from inside the "total envelope". The existing provision currently includes a BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy and an MSc Occupational Therapy.

The Extended Route will add to the existing numbers. |
| Learner non-continuation | 7% | 8% | 2021-22 | This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency |

				(HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 4%. We do not need to explore this data point through the assessment as it does not raise any concerns.
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	92%	92%	2021-22	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects The data point is equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has been maintained. We do not need to explore this data point through the assessment as it does not raise any concerns.

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2023	The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education." We did not explore this data point through this assessment because Silver suggests a very good level of teaching delivery.
Learner satisfaction	82.3%	88.8%	2025	This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 7%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because it raises no cause for concern.
HCPC performance review cycle length			2026-27	Five years	In their last performance review, which took place in the 2021-22 academic year, we considered the education provider were performing well and they were given the maximum five-year interval to the next review.

We also considered intelligence from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). We had a virtual meeting with a representative of the RCOT and we were informed that the RCOT were supportive of these programmes because they were meeting genuine regional demand for qualified occupational therapists. This information was shared the visitors in stage 2 to guide their decision-making.

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.

<u>Admissions</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Information for applicants** –
    - o In the approval request form (ARF), the education provider stated that all programmes are bound by policies set at School and University level. In the case of Occupational Therapy programme, this means the School of Health and Society. The admissions for the two proposed programmes will work slightly differently. For the Extended Route (ER), applicants will be assessed as they would be for the existing approved full-time BSc programme, which is through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). An interview is part of the selection process, and applicants who pass that stage are offered a place.
    - o For the apprenticeship route, applications are considered through the education provider's Apprenticeship Services Unit (ASU). After this point, depending on the candidate and their background, applicants will have two pathways. One of these is a joint interview with the education provider and the employer. The other is with the education provider alone, if the employer has already interviewed the candidate or has determined that an interview is not necessary.
    - o These processes are available to all confirmed and potential applicants in the University Admissions Policy and Guidance, the Programme Specifications, and the University website.

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider as a whole functions. The distinct processes for the two different models of learning are sufficient to ensure that applicants will have appropriate information about the programmes. However, for the apprenticeship, we will need to clarify how the employer will determine whether or not an interview is necessary. We will need to assess this as part of stage 2 of the approval process for the apprenticeship programme.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - o The ARF states that for both new programmes, applicants' language skills, character and health will be assessed identically as with the full-time BSc provision, in accordance with the School processes which is set out in their Academic Regulators for Taught programmes 2024/25 policy.
  - o The education provider's Admissions and Retention policy states that applicants will be required to demonstrate medical fitness to practice. The education provider note that this is especially pertinent for programmes governed by the regulatory and professional bodies. The policy also explains how applicants may be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks which contribute to determine suitability for working with vulnerable groups.
  - o Applicants are required to meet the English Language requirements by take IELTS (International English Language Testing System). The majority of programmes a score of 6.0 overall, with no section below 5.5, though some programmes may ask for higher scores.
  - o Any issues flagged through these processes are considered by the School Admissions Panel. Applicants can be withdrawn from the process where this is an appropriate sanction. This is all set out in programme handbooks and other relevant documentation.
  - o This is useful information for our understanding of how the education provider works and there appears to be alignment between the existing approaches and the new programmes. However, because one of the new programmes is an apprenticeship, we also need to understand who will have responsibility for ensuring that learners undertake appropriate checks before commencing the programme – the education provider or the employer. This was not clear from the information available, so we will clarify through stage 2 how this will work on the proposed new apprenticeship.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - o Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) will be available for both the new programmes. There is an institutional Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy, which already applies for the existing approved BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy. This policy enables applicants to gain entry onto a programme or receive credit by demonstrating relevant learning from work or life experience. Applicants are required to provide evidence that their prior learning matches the programme requirements.

- o The education provider have a guiding statement which aims to be welcoming towards learners who wish to have APEL considered. Such applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis dependent on the programme, but these considerations must be in line with the University Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes. There is a role of APEL Co-ordinator at the level of the School and this person is responsible for agreeing all APEL admissions.
  - o Exceptions to the overall guidance for individual programmes must be agreed by the institution-level Programme Approval and Review Panel (PARP). All agreed exceptions must be noted on the programme specifications and recorded by the University Quality Management Office.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider works overall. There is clearly an appropriate process in place to ensure that the new programmes use APEL appropriately and equitably and that there is oversight for this process.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The ARF states that for both of the proposed new programmes, applicants will be assessed "in an identical way to the current full-time BSc provision". The education provider state that all key decision-making staff have been through EDI training.
  - o The education provider's approach to EDI in admissions is guided by the university-level EDI Statement Of Ambition.
  - o This document outlines the education provider's commitment to embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of university life. It emphasizes creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to thrive, regardless of background. The statement sets out strategic goals to challenge inequality, foster inclusive leadership, and ensure that EDI principles are reflected in teaching, research, recruitment, and community engagement.
  - o Where applicants are identified as having the need for support, the education provider aims to make assessments as early as possible, o that applicants can be supported through the process, meaning they have as fair a chance as others. Successful applicants who need reasonable adjustments to complete the programme will have those considered by University Disability Services. The education provider additionally notes that all of their policies must go through an Equality Impact Assessment.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider works overall. There are clearly appropriate processes in place to ensure that the education provider will act fairly in admissions towards applicants from all backgrounds.
  - o However, specifically for the apprenticeship programme, we will need to clarify whether the education provider's or the employer's EDI policies will govern admissions on to the programme, and where responsibility for implementation and monitoring will sit.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: As the employer has not been confirmed for the proposed apprenticeship programme, we will need to consider the relationship between the education provider and employer in the following areas through Stage 2 of the process:

- SET 2.1 – Explain the employer's process for deciding when interviews are required.
- SET 2.3 Who – out of the education provider and the employer – will have responsibility for ensuring applicants have a good command of English
- SET 2.4-who will have responsibility for assessing the suitability of applicants including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- SET 2.5 who will have responsibility for ensuring applicants are aware of and comply with health requirements
- SET 2.7- whose EDI policies will apply in the application process, and who will have responsibility for monitoring and implementation

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]** –
    o The proposed programmes are both at Level 6. This means that they are at or above the level that SET 1.1 states we would normally expect for an HCPC-approved occupational therapy programme. As the education provider is a Higher Education Institution with degree awarding powers, we are satisfied that they have the structures and mechanisms in place to deliver education and training to these academic levels.
- **Sustainability of provision** –
    o The ARF states that the education provider have carried out a costing exercise for the new programmes, although the detail of this is not elaborated. One important consideration for the proposed apprenticeship programme is that it will not involve an overall increase in occupational therapy learner numbers. The Extended Route, on the other hand, will increase overall learner numbers. The intention is for a cohort size of 25 for that programme. The fact that the two other occupational therapy programmes are intended to lose 25 learners between them might raise an issue around sustainability of those programmes, but the education provider will be entering performance review in the 2026-27 academic year, so that issue can be considered then.

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[1] 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

- o The Governance and Management Policy sets our the lines of responsibility and accountability, from the Vice-Chancellor downwards. The University Charter, Statutes, and Ordinances set out the parameters for the institution's administration. The Council is the the supreme governing body and the Senate controls academic matters. The Scheme of Delegation defines and explains the different roles and their management. The Senate oversees performance monitoring via policies like Academic Regulations and the Students' Union Code of Practice.
  - o Overall, we consider that the new provision is sustainable – the institutional approach for the new programmes appears to align appropriately with the existing approaches for their HCPC-approved programmes. They are an experienced provider of occupational therapy, of apprenticeships and of HCPC-approved programmes more generally.
- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o In the ARF, the education provider states that their institutional policies require all subjects to have a single person with overall responsibility for delivery of that profession. This is contained in the Academic Role Descriptions document and Expectations of Academic Standards document. This person is required to report to senior management and has overall responsibility for effective delivery.
  - o The School has a document clearly showing lines of responsibility and accountability. Two documents are important in this respect: the Academic Role Descriptions and Expectations of Academic Standards. They set out expectations around reporting and management. Senior-level supervision is provided by the Scheme of Academic Governance, including the university Senate and its committees. Their role in this area, according to the education provider, is to "grant authority, define expectations or verify performance". The Academic Handbook is their responsibility.
  - o There is limited information available about how the education provider will work with employer partners to ensure appropriate delivery on the apprenticeship. We will need to explore this through stage 2 of the process.
  - o Overall the approach which the education provider takes with the new provision will align with our understanding. However, as noted above, through stage 2 we will need to consider how the education provider will ensure appropriate delivery in the employer setting.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o The ARF describes the outlines of their approach to staff management. All staff members are supported through structured management and development systems, including designated line managers, monthly one-to-one meetings, and a workload allocation model that incorporates time for continuing professional development.

- o The University of Salford's Strategy 2025–2030 describes how the education provider wishes to become a leading institution through education, research, and innovation. It focuses on creating opportunities for students, staff, and communities by fostering inclusive growth, sustainability, and digital transformation.
  - o The University Academic Career Framework and Career Conversation framework gives some additional information about the detail of staff management, including the policies and procedures that govern HR-related matters at the education provider.
  - o We consider that there is clear alignment in this area between the planned approach to the new programmes and the existing arrangements at the education provider. However, we will need to understand more clearly through stage 2 how the education provider maintains appropriate oversight over staff management in the employer setting.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The information in the ARF about this area is relatively brief. The education provider states that there is "no formal partnership agreement for the delivery of the programmes". However, elsewhere in the ARF we have already seen information about how the Apprenticeship Support Unit (ASU) will work with employers to collaborate effectively. A Collaborative Partnerships Policy is in place and guides the work of the ASU by setting down clear requirements and expectations about frequency of meetings and other matters.
  - o The Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedure elaborates this area, relevant to the Extended Route programme. It notes that learning environments are quality assured through the North West Learning Environment Education Audit (NWLEEA), a system that has been consistently applied across all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and placement providers in the North West since 2016. The workings of the NWLEEA are routinely reviewed and updated.
  - o We consider that the arrangements in place for these new programmes are appropriately aligned with the institutional approach, as they have clear mechanisms for co-operating with both conventional practice educators and employers in the apprenticeship. This is important because the two programmes here are an Extended Route, with standard practice-based earning, and an apprenticeship.
  - o However, through stage 2 we will need to explore certain matters relating to this area:
    - Are there formal agreements in place with relevant employer partners?
    - How will learners be enabled to understand how to understand how to raise complaints, and to understand that only completion of the approved programme will provide eligibility for registration?

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: There are some issues that we will need to clarify through stage 2, specifically regarding the apprenticeship:

- (SET 3.1);
- (SET 3.11);
- (SET 3.2);
- (SET 3.17);
- how the education provider will ensure it is clearly communicated to learners that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register (SET 3.18).
- how the education provider will manage overall learner numbers. The ARF states that "Numbers for the degree apprenticeship are taken from the total envelope (150 learners per year) rather than being in addition to the existing numbers." We understand this to mean that cohort sizes on one or both of the existing approved occupational therapy programmes will be reduced, but this issue will need to be clarified. We also do not have specific information about how the education provider intends to manage the increased learner numbers from the Extended Route. We will need to clarify this (SET 3.2).

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: We will need to consider the relationship between the education provider and employer in the following areas through Stage 2 of the process:

- SET 3.1 – whether the education provider has secured formal agreements with employer partners
- SET 3.2 – how the education provider will ensure appropriate delivery in the employer setting.
- SET 3.2 – how the education provider will manage overall learner numbers. The ARF states that "Numbers for the degree apprenticeship are taken from the total envelope (150 learners per year) rather than being in addition to the existing numbers." We understand this to mean that cohort sizes on one or both of the existing approved occupational therapy programmes will be reduced, but this issue will need to be clarified. We also do not have specific information about how the education provider intends to manage the increased learner numbers from the Extended Route. We will need to clarify this
- SET 3.11 – how the education provider maintains appropriate oversight over staff management in the employer setting
- SET 3.17 – how the education provider will ensure that, in the employer setting, learners will have appropriate support to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users
- SET 3.18 – how the education provider will ensure it is clearly communicated to learners that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register -

<u>Quality, monitoring, and evaluation</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality** –
  - The ARF notes two key policies for this area, the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes and the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Policy. The education provider say that the mechanisms for ensuring academic quality are identical for both the new programmes as they are on the existing HCPC-approved provision. This area is governed by policies approved and monitored at the institutional level.
  - Additionally, for the new programmes, a university-level monitoring and enhancement policy will be in place. This is common to all new programmes – each will have its own dedicated action log, kept by the Programme Approval and Review Panel (PARP). There are various layers of quality management which will be used. This includes a formal requirements for external examiners, and compliance with the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure (PMEP) which has been designed to align all programmes at the education provider with the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. PMEP allows the education provider to identify and address poor performance, and to highlight best practice. The education provider also note that the nationwide Degree Apprenticeship standards, issued by the Institute for Apprenticeships, will apply to the programmes, along with Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) regulations. The PMEP outlines the education provider's intention to achieve continuous improvement by constant monitoring. External examiners are part of this requirement; all programmes must have at least one.
  - We consider there is appropriate alignment between the education provider's existing arrangements and the approach to the new programmes. However, we will need to explore through stage 2 how the employers on the apprenticeship programme will ensure that learners understand attendance requirements, and how to obtain appropriate consent.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
  - The ARF states that there are cross-School policies for practice-based learning, as well as established agreements with practice-based learning providers in the region. Learners must complete evaluations for all completed placements, and the information gathered thereby is used for continuous improvement. There is an established quality assurance process for practice-based learning at the education

provider and this will be used for the new programmes. The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) Learning And Development Standards are used to shape this audit process.

- o The audit policy gives further information about these existing audit practices, including a description of the Northwest Learning Environment Education Audit (NWLEEA) and the Northwest Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (NW QAEF). Learners are also able to comment on their placements in real time via the Practice Assessment Record & Evaluation (PARE) system. Within the Occupational Therapy provision, regular meetings are held between practice education facilitators, leads, and practice educators to foster collaboration and shared learning.
- o Concerns identified through any of these processes must be addressed by the occupational therapy academic team responsible for practice placement education, often in consultation with the programme leader and professional lead. This responsive approach ensures that student voices are heard and acted upon. Feedback is also shared directly with practice educators, promoting transparency and mutual accountability in maintaining high-quality learning environments.
- o There is clear alignment in this area between the approach used at the education provider and the approach that will be used for the new programmes. Through stage 2 we will request some additional information on the specific detail of how the education provider-employer relationship will be used to maintain practice quality, including the suitability and preparedness of practice educators.

- **Learner involvement** –
  - o The ARF sets out the various mechanisms by which learners are involved. This is a high-level description with limited detail, noting that they are involved in forums at various levels, including the university, the School and the programme. The education provider state that programme handbooks and specifications lay out the detail.
  - o A briefing and resources document notes that the Student Voice & Engagement Team ensures learners are actively involved in shaping their university experience.
  - o Working across the institution, the team captures and represents student feedback through both quantitative and qualitative methods, covering key areas such as Welcome, Induction, Registration, and Teaching & Learning Quality. This includes the distribution of targeted surveys like the Salford Student Survey, which helps students assess their academic and personal development while directing them to relevant support resources. The Module Evaluation process, conducted three times per trimester, gathers detailed feedback on teaching, assessment, learning resources, and student representation, feeding directly into programme monitoring and enhancement strategies.
  - o The education provider also has an "Always Listening" policy, which outlines principles for open, flexible, and timely communication between students and staff. This approach encourages co-creation,

allowing students to contribute ideas that enhance their learning experience and support their aspirations. Additionally, the National Student Survey (NSS) provides independent feedback from final-year students, which is analysed and shared across the School.

- o Learner involvement is embedded in all HCPC-regulated programmes through a structured learner representative system. School-level representatives and course leaders meet regularly with programme leaders and Heads of Subject to discuss student concerns and ideas. These meetings result in jointly owned Student Representative Action Logs, promoting transparency and accountability. The Associate Dean for Student Experience also holds monthly meetings with School and Course Reps, further strengthening the feedback loop. Learners contribute to key institutional processes, including the recruitment of new academic staff, highlighting their integral role in shaping the university's educational environment.
- o There is clear alignment between the existing approaches and those to be used on the new programmes.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o The ARF states that service user involvement is threaded through the whole life-course of a programme, from development, design, admissions, resourcing and teaching. Service users are themselves involved in delivery of some sessions. This is all governed by a School level policy. Key documents include the School Service User and Carer Guide, and the programme and module specifications.
  - o The stated intention is that service users will be involved in the established way on the new provision. The School Service Users and Carers Strategy requires their participation in programme development, clinical education, and research activities. All programmes must involve service users in curriculum design and delivery as a core requirement.
  - o Individual programmes are encouraged to recognise service user support in specific material ways, and to provide appropriate support, continuous evaluation of effectiveness, and relevant training.
  - o There is clear alignment between the existing approaches and those to be used on the new programmes. This is because the education provider has the appropriate tools and policies in place to involve service users in an appropriate way. We will need to explore in more detail through stage 2 the specific plans for involving service users with the apprenticeship.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: As the employer has not been confirmed for the proposed apprenticeship programme, we will need to consider the relationship between the education provider and employer in the following areas through Stage 2 of the process

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: Regarding the apprenticeship, there are certain areas where we will request additional information through stage 2:

- how the education provider works with and monitors / evaluates the role of the employer as part of delivering ongoing quality and effectiveness (SET 3.4);
- how the education provider – employer relationship will be used to maintain practice quality (SET 5.3);
- the specific plans for involving service users in the apprenticeship setting (SET 3.7);
- how the education provider will ensure that learners are enabled to obtain appropriate consent from service users and other learners in the employer setting (SET 4.10);
- how the education provider will ensure learners in the employer setting understand the attendance requirements of those settings (SET 4.11);
  how the education provider will ensure they can work with employer partners to appropriately monitor quality and safety in the practice-based learning settings (SET 5.4);
- how the education provider will ensure they can work with employer partners to appropriately monitor the training status of staff undertaking supervision in the employer setting, and the supply of timely information to them (SETs 5.7 and 5.8).

<u>Learners</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
    - The ARF states that the education provider has a wide range of services available to support learners, both academically, personally, and pastorally. There are formal mechanisms at the level of the university and the School. The relevant policies include, non-exhaustively:
      - Student Support Policy
      - Personalised Academic Support Policy
      - Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure
      - Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan
      - Student Complaints Procedure
      - Academic Appeals Procedure
      - Whistleblowing Policy
      - Consent to Role Play – guidelines for good practice
    - Considering all these policies, we can be confident that the education provider has an appropriate and comprehensive suite of policies for ensuring that learners are as well supported as possible. They set out clear pathways for appropriate action and learners can be signposted to them by staff members. The education provider also has a wide range of academic and digital resources, including access to the University library, which offers study spaces, specialist software, and

one-to-one support sessions. A specific system exists for reporting of serious matters.
  - o There is appropriate alignment between the education provider's existing approaches and the approach to be used on the new programmes. However, we will need to explore through stage 2 how the apprenticeship programme will ensure that employer partners support learners and handle complaints appropriately.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
  - o In the ARF the education provider describe their established onboarding procedure that requires all learners to complete annual declarations, a practice consistently applied across both existing and new programmes. Learners must report any changes in their health or professional suitability, and such disclosures are handled in accordance with the University's Fitness to Practice Policy. The Annual Declaration of Good Conduct and Good Health is a requirement for all learners.
  - o There are also informal mechanisms by which concerns about learners' ongoing suitability to practise or study can be raised and discussed, for example regular meetings between staff, learners and practice educators.
  - o There is appropriate alignment in this area between existing approaches and the requirements of the new programmes. However, we will need to consider through stage 2 how the education provider will ensure appropriate monitoring of ongoing suitability on the apprenticeship programme.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
  - o In the ARF the education provider state that Interprofessional Education (IPE) is embedded across all modules, with no variation between its delivery in the new programmes and the current ones. They note also their asynchronous and online components, which enhances accessibility for students who are not regularly on campus. Apprentices also engage in work-based learning that involves collaboration with other disciplines, and they will share these experiences with peers enrolled in different programmes.
  - o A relevant document is the School Interprofessional Education Strategy (2022), which directs all the work in this area.
  - o The education provider outlined specific activities that take place in different years of some programmes, such as particular workshops or guided inter-professional reflections on professional expectations.
  - o We consider there to be overall appropriate alignment in this area between existing arrangements and the new programmes. However, we will need to consider through stage 2 how the education provider will ensure appropriate exposure to IPE specifically for apprentices.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The ARF notes that there is a large suite of EDI initiatives and programmes at the university-level. Details around these were also set

out in 'Admissions' above. The education provider state that equity considerations were highly important in the programme development for the Extended Route, as it is intended to broaden access to occupational therapy education.

- o Case studies across occupational therapy provision have been reviewed to ensure that they are suitable for a diverse range of audiences. Teaching and learning methods have similarly been reviewed with a view to allowing learners to "identify and address needs of diverse communities and to provide culturally sensitive interventions, practice providing reasonable adjustments and adapt communication to the needs of the individual."
- o Some of the policies relevant to this area include (non-exhaustively):
  - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
  - Accessible Teaching and Learning Framework
  - Equality Impact Assessment
  - Dignity and Work & Study Policy
  - Role of the Inclusion & Diversity Manager guidelines
  - Decolonising the Curriculum
- o We consider that there is appropriate alignment in this area between existing approaches and those proposed for the new programmes. However, we will need to explore through stage 2 how the education provider will ensure appropriate EDI policies in the employer settings for the apprenticeship.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: As the employer has not been confirmed for the proposed apprenticeship programme, we will need to consider the relationship between the education provider and employer in the following areas through Stage 2 of the process:

- how the apprenticeship programme will ensure that employer partners support learners appropriately (SET 3.13);
- how the education provider will ensure appropriate monitoring of ongoing suitability on the apprenticeship programme (SET 3.16);
- how the education provider will ensure appropriate exposure to IPE for apprentices (SET 4.9);
- how the education provider will ensure an appropriate complaints process in the employer setting (SET 3.15);
- how the education provider will ensure appropriate EDI policies in the employer settings for the apprenticeship (SET 3.14).

It is especially important for us to understand how the employers will support learners on the apprenticeship. This is because the learners will spend the majority of their time in that setting.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** –
  - The ARF states that the new programmes will adhere to the same University-level policies as existing ones. They state that all occupational therapy courses follow a comprehensive assessment framework. This includes anonymous marking where feasible. The framework guaranteeing high quality moderation and assessment applies also to assessment briefs and marking criteria, as well as procedures for verification, standardisation, and both internal and external moderation.
  - Some of the relevant policies are:
    - Assessment & Feedback Policy
    - Moderation Process
    - Verification Process
    - External Examiner on Taught Programme Policy

    These policies between them lay out clear and appropriate standards about how learners' work should be marked and moderated, and offer defined pathways to ensuring that such work will be as objective as possible.
  - We consider that there is appropriate alignment in this area, as the new programmes will be covered by the same policies and the same guidelines as currently exist at the education provider.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - The ARF states that new programmes are required to follow the same University-wide procedures and policies as the current provision, with additional regulations specific to Degree Apprenticeships applying to that pathway.
  - Occupational therapy programmes have distinct rules requiring students to pass every module individually, as compensation between modules is not permitted. Furthermore, practice-based learning is governed by specific guidelines to align with Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) learning and development standards. These policies guarantee that students who advance and graduate have achieved the learning outcomes aligned with the Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists.
  - We consider this to be appropriate alignment between the existing and proposed provision. We note also that the education provider has crafted specific regulations which apply to apprenticeships, which is relevant in this assessment because one of the programmes is an apprenticeship.
- **Appeals** –
  - The ARF states that the academic appeals process is consistent across the university and implemented at both the School and programme levels. The policy remains unchanged for the new programmes and mirrors that of the existing provision.

- The Academic Appeals Procedure allows learners to request a formal review of decisions made by the Assessment Board or Postgraduate Research Awards Board (PRAB) regarding their academic progress or awards. Appeals can only be submitted after receiving official results and must be based on specific grounds such as exceptional or mitigating circumstances not previously disclosed, procedural irregularities, or decisions deemed manifestly unreasonable. The appeal process has two stages, offering learners several opportunities to have their case considered.
- This appears to be appropriate alignment.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process due to the alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

For the proposed apprenticeship programme: as learners will also be employees on this proposed programme, the employer is fundamental to the design, sustainability and delivery of the programme to ensure those who complete, can meet our requirements for registration. It is therefore appropriate for us to refer the 19 SETs identified through the institution level standards review, to Stage 2. These are outlined below:

- SET 2.1 – how employers provide information about the programme for their employees. We will need to assess how applicants understand about the programme, and how they and the education provider, gain the information they need to make an informed choice.
- SETs 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 - whose policies and processes relating to English language, character, and health are taken into consideration through the application process, and what happens, and who holds the overall decision, if they differ.
- SET 2.7 - whose policies and processes relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into consideration through the application process, and what happens, and who holds the overall decision, if they differ.
- SET 3.1 – where learners are confirmed as coming from to consider the sustainability of the proposed programme. This includes understanding how the resourcing / threats / support are recognised and managed and how the partnership is maintained.
- SET 3.2 - how the education provider and employer understand the responsibilities of all involved, and work together to deliver an effective programme.

- SET 3.4 - how the education provider works with and monitors / evaluates the role of the employer as part of delivering ongoing quality and effectiveness.
- SET 3.13 – the additional policies and processes in place at the employer to support wellbeing and learning. As part of this, we need to understand which policies apply in each situation and how learners know about these; how learners access academic support while in their place of employment; and whether and how processes are shared between the employer and the education provider.
- SET 3.14 - how the education provider and the employer work together to provide and impartial, fair and supportive environment for learners to progress.
- SET 3.15 - who learners complain to and what they can expect from each party. This includes how the education provider manages complaints from learners about allegations relating to incidents which happened at their place of employment.
- SET 3.16 – the specific policies and processes from the education provider and employer to ensure the ongoing suitability of the learner. We will need to understand which apply in which situation, and which takes priority relating to achievement and progression.
- SET 3.17 – the specific policies and processes in place to support learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users. We need to understand which policies apply in which situation and who responds.
- SET 4.10 - the policies and processes in place for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners. This is because the education provider and employer may have specific, and differing, policies / processes.
- SET 4.11 - as learners are employers, how employment policies work in partnership with the education provider's requirements about attendance and how they are monitored and shared between the parties, and how the requirements are identified and communicated.
- SET 5.3 - understand how the education provider assesses and monitors the practice environment through the partnership with the employer.
- SET 5.4 - the processes to make sure practice-based learning takes place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- SETs 5.7 and 5.8 - the processes to ensure practice educators have the programme specific understanding to deliver and assess the learning outcomes; and learners and practice educators have the information they require to be prepared before going into the practice environment.

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

- Libraries – the education provider has four main libraries across its campuses. All learners have access to these libraries and one of them is open 24 hours a day.

- Private learning spaces – all the libraries offer dedicated breakout rooms where individual learners or groups of learners can undertake group work or hold seminars
- Skills suites – the education provider has a number of simulation rooms and clinical learning areas which are used to teaching learners practical skills, and allowing them to practise their clinical competencies.
- Learner support centre - The education provider's central support centre is called askUS. It acts as learners' first point of contact for information about the support services available, whether pastoral, academic, personal or social.

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
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Extended Route	FT (Full time)	Occupational Therapist	25 learners, 1 cohort per year	08/09/2025
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Occupational Therapist	25 learners, I cohort per year	08/09/2025

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 the Royal College of Occupational Therapists as follows:
- They considered that this programme was necessary and they were supportive of it.

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.

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 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 were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

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 –**
  - The proposed programmes are both at Level 6. This means that they are at or above the level that SET 1.1 states we would normally expect for an HCPC-approved occupational therapy programme. As the education provider is a Higher Education Institution with degree awarding powers, we are satisfied that they have the structures and mechanisms in place to deliver education and training to these academic levels.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions –**

- o For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, the education provider was asked to submit additional evidence around SETs 2.1, 2.3. 2.4, 2.5, 2.6. and 2.7. This was to enable us to understand better how the education provider would work together with the employer in admissions.
- o The education provider noted that admissions information would be available on the website and at open days. They noted also that for the degree apprenticeship, information would be provided to employers and potential apprentices in joint meetings to explain the programme. All applicants for both programme will be interviewed. For the degree apprenticeship, this interview will involve both programme staff and employer staff. The interview will be competency-based, requiring demonstration of specific knowledge and understanding.
- o They supplied evidence in the form of Open Day presentations, interview presentations and information packs that would be supplied to employers about the apprenticeship. They linked also to the website pages that explained to applicants the application requirements and pathways. In particular this evidence gave applicants and potential applicants information about the following programme requirements:
  - Health – Learners have an occupational health review as part of the onboarding process.
  - Suitability – DBS checks are part of the onboarding process and learners are expected to declare any relevant information.
  - English language skills – all learners for whom English is not their first language are required to undertaken an IELTs assessment, aligned with the HCPC requirement.
- o All of the above are under the ultimate authority of the education provider.
- o Judgements about AP(E)L will be made on an individual basis, guided by the education provider's institutional policy, which was supplied as evidence.
- o Regarding equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in admissions, the education provider submitted their university police, their admissions policy, and an equality impact assessment (EIA) undertaken for both programmes. They explained that they would proactively seek to ensure that all applicants were treated fairly and throughout the admissions process and that they would ensure that all applicants had fair opportunity to demonstrate their suitability. Applicant feedback will be sought following the process and data about admissions is monitored, in line with university policies.
- o We considered that the standards in SET 2 were met. This was because the education provider had demonstrated that they had appropriate measures for providing information to applicants and for ensuring that only suitable individuals were admitted to the programme. We carried forward from stage 1 some additional assessment of how the apprenticeship programme would meet certain SET 2 standards.

Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the education provider and the employer would work together through the process, and which policies would ultimately govern the process if there was a disagreement. It was clear from the evidence submitted that it was the education provider's policies which would ultimately govern the process, but that the education provider would be working together with the employer to determine the suitability of applicants. The education provider also clarified through their submission how the employers would provide information about the apprenticeship to potential applicants. This would take place through joint meetings with interested learners.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, the education provider was asked to submit additional evidence around SETs 3.1, 3.2. 3.4, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15. 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18. Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the education provider and the employer would work together to ensure these SETs were all met for the proposed apprenticeship programme.
  - The education provider noted that the two new programmes would run alongside two existing occupational therapy programmes.. They stated that this would contribute to their sustainability. They supplied a briefing and resources document, which set out how the programme would be supported at the institutional level and how the education provider would collaborate with employer partners to ensure that the apprenticeship programme continued to be viable. They also supplied mapping documents which showed the programmes' compatibility with the requirements of the HCPC, and of the NHS Key Skills & Behaviours (KSB) matrix.
  - Alongside the mapping documents and the briefing and resources document, we also reviewed a curriculum vitae (CV) for the programme lead, and for the 19 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) occupational therapists who make up the programme team. Information about the programmes' management structure was supplied. In the context of the request for additional information about the apprenticeship, we noted there is a Directorate Lead for Apprenticeships who works within the School Apprenticeship Team, and is supported by a full-time School Head of Apprenticeships. Part of the remit of these roles is to ensure that governance of apprenticeships is appropriately shared with employer partners.
  - We also requested additional evidence around quality monitoring on the apprenticeship, and this was supplied by the education provider. Alongside the briefing and resources document, which set out lines of responsibility and accountability, we saw the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Policy (PMEP) and an academic policy for taught programmes. Alongside the information about the School Apprenticeship Team and the Head of Apprenticeships, it was clear to us that there were specific mechanisms in place for close collaboration

with employer partners around quality monitoring. These include regular tripartite meetings focused on specific learners, ongoing opportunities for feedback in both directions between the employer and the education provider, and monitoring of agreed metrics. The main responsibility for this monitoring is taken by the education provider.

o The education provider submitted detailed evidence describing how they would maintain relationships with key stakeholders. The evidence provided was mostly in the form of institutional policies and procedures. For example, they cited the Practice Placement Education section of the briefing and resources document, which set out the requirements for practice educators. We also saw the educator handbook. For the apprenticeship programme, the education provider also noted that there have been and will be regular scheduled meetings between the education provider and the employer, at both the strategic and the operational level. Practice educators will have briefings before each placement block, and were invited to have input into the programmes.

o The education provider also supplied information about how they would collaborate with relevant regional partners to maintain appropriate capacity. They have an agreed share model with other education providers, and information was provided about the detail of this agreed share model. They also submitted a narrative about how they are working with other education providers and other practice education providers to maintain appropriate capacity for all learners on their provision.

o The visitors also reviewed CVs for programme staff and job descriptions for key roles, such as programme director and practice-based learning lead. The education provider also submitted workforce modelling and policies for visiting staff. The visitors considered that this evidence met SETs 3.9 and 3.10 because it demonstrated that there was a strong programme team in place, with appropriate levels of experience, skill and qualification. The visitors considered that this evidence was comprehensive, because it communicated a clear idea of who would be delivering the programme and who would be responsible for specific parts. The inclusion of evidence like the process for inducting new staff, and detailed information about how staff development would work, gave them strong confidence that the education provider had a clear understanding of the responsibilities in this area.

o With regards to SET 3.12, regarding resources for learners and educators, the education provider submitted the policies and procedures that would govern how learners and educators were given effective and appropriate access to the necessary resources. This included programme handbooks.

o The visitors reviewed the additional evidence around SETs 3.13-3.18. The key question we asked the education provider to clarify through this evidence was how they and the employer would share responsibility for ensuring these standards were met. It was clear from

the evidence submitted that the education provider was taking the lead in learners' wellbeing support, EDI monitoring, learner complaints, monitoring of ongoing suitability, and ensuring that concerns could be appropriately raised. There are specific policies in place around each of these areas at the institutional level. Evidence such as the Student Charter, the Learning and Development for Apprentices document, the safeguarding policy, and the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) set out the education provider approach. Apprentices would have to pass a yearly "re-onboarding" process focused on suitability. The importance of speaking up and whistleblowing are emphasised before each module, and we saw evidence of this.

- o It will be made clear to applicants in the application process, and is restated in all relevant handbooks, that only completion of the approved award provides eligibility for application to the HCPC Register.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, the education provider was asked to submit additional evidence around SETs 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11. Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the education provider and the employer would work together to ensure these SETs were all met for the apprenticeship.
  - o The education provider submitted evidence showing how the programmes were structured and how they would be delivered. This included module descriptors for both programmes, and separate SOPs mapping exercises for each programme. Also included was an academic quality policy, and programme specifications and handbooks and a formal internally produced guidance document that set out to staff how to map their programmes appropriately. In the mapping documents, the education provider had referenced both the standards of proficiency (SOPs) and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs). The visitors were therefore satisfied that SETs 4.1 and 4.2 were met, because it was clear to them how the education was integrating the SOPs and the SCPEs with the programmes.
  - o Other documentation relating to the programmes' content and structure was also supplied by the education provider. These documents set out why the programmes had been designed in the way they had. A policy on how to use the simulation suite on the programmes was also included. The programme descriptors set out the teaching and learning methods that would be used on the programme. The education provider stated that they had designed the programme around "four golden threads" of inclusive practice, occupation-focused, theory-driven and evidence-informed.
  - o In light of this evidence, the visitors considered that all the other standards in SET 4 were met. This was because the education provider had clearly articulated their approach in all relevant areas, and

where necessary had supplied an evidence base. They had described the stakeholders who had been consulted, and had adopted a wide range of teaching and learning methods. They had a clear mechanism for updating and reviewing the programmes to ensure they reflected professional expectations and current practice. The staff had a range of clinical experience which would help the learners understand contemporary approaches. Every module included at least some requirement for evidence-based practice and autonomous working.

- o Regarding the additional SETs, the education provider included their School Interprofessional Education (IPE) Strategy, and a document which set out in detail how they would use IPE across the occupational therapy provision. They noted that likely professions for the programmes' IPE would be physiotherapy, social work, and nursing / medicine. We also saw a consent to role play form, which learners must complete at the start of each year of the programme, and were directed to the section of the Practice Assessment Document (PAD) where learners are required to demonstrate they understand how to obtain appropriate consent.
- o Regarding SET 4.11, and the specific issue of how attendance is monitored on the apprenticeship, this comes under the responsibility of the education provider's Apprenticeship Administration Officer (AAO), who liaises with employers to ensure that attendance is appropriate. The AAO can work with the employers to implement and monitor improvement plans for learners with unsatisfactory attendance. This is separate from the employers' own policies and procedures around attendance of employees.
- o We considered that these standards were met because it was clear that the education provider was able to work effectively with the employers to deliver appropriate IPE, to enable learners to understand consent, and to ensure appropriate attendance.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, the education provider was asked to submit additional evidence around SETs 5.3, 5.4 5.7 and 5.8. Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the education provider and the employer would work together to ensure these SETs were all met for the apprenticeship.
  - o The education provider submitted a Programme Structure document. This described the overall structure of the programme and explained how practice-based learning was integrated. Assessment guidance for practice-based learning was also described, which enabled the visitors to understand how the competencies acquired in the classroom would help learners to progress in practice-based learning, and vice versa. Draft partnership agreements and a practice-based learning strategy were also supplied.
  - o We considered that SETs 5.1 and 5.2 were met by this evidence. This was because the education provider had shown that practice-based learning was appropriately integrated into the programmes, and that

the structure, duration and range were sufficient to deliver all the relevant learning outcomes and SOPs.

- o The education provider also referred to the agreed share model noted above, which would enable them to be allocated an appropriate share of practice-based learning capacity. This mechanism allows practice-based learning to be scheduled to fit within the overall strategic requirements of the region. For the apprenticeship programme specifically, the education provider stated that practice-based learning will be blended into the normal apprentice training hours. Where additional clinical skills are needed, and cannot be acquired in the employer setting, the education provider will ensure such experience can be obtained.

- o They also cited recent educator updates which demonstrated the appropriate availability of practice educators to support the programme, and the Practice education handbook for educators. This document explained how practice educators would be selected, trained and supported on the programme. We also saw a document called the Learning Environment Audit, which the education provider will use to ensure that practice-based learning is taking place in an appropriate setting. The education provider clarified that all assessment in practice-based learning would be undertaken by registered occupational therapists.

- o The visitors considered that this evidence met SETs 5.5 and 5.6. This was because the education provider had clearly set out their approach to securing practice educators with appropriate skills, qualifications and experience. They had also demonstrated their process for ensuring that practice-based learning providers would supply sufficient numbers of practice educators, and how those practice educators would be prepared and trained for effective supervision.

- o With regard to the additional SETs, the education provider submitted both site and organisational audit forms, to support the SETs requiring appropriate quality audits of practice-based learning, and a safe and supportive environment. They also provided Learning Environment Audits and the practice educator handbook. This was to demonstrate that practice educators would receive appropriate training and be appropriately prepared for their supervision of learners. These documents would have to be completed for all the apprenticeship settings. We considered that this demonstrated the education provider had taken overall responsibility for ensuring that all the SET 5 standards were met on the apprenticeship. This was because whatever local policies might be in place, these were superseded by the education provider's clear requirements.

- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o For this area, as well as the normal stage 2 standards, the education provider was asked to submit additional evidence around SETs 6.3, 6.4 and 6.6. Specifically, we were seeking to understand how the

- education provider and the employer would work together to ensure these SETs were all met for the apprenticeship.
  - o The education provider supplied a SOPs mapping exercise, which set out which SOPs which would be assessed in which parts of the programmes, as well as individual programme specifications. They also produced additional information about the overall assessment strategy, in the form of the Assessment strategy from the Briefing and Resources document.
  - o In the submission, there was information on retake policy, academic integrity, assessment tools, and a learner guide to assessment.
  - o In light of this evidence, the visitors considered that SETs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.5 were all met. This was because the education provider had demonstrated that their assessment strategy and design would require that all learners were assessed on both SOPs and SCPEs at appropriate points of the programme, and that learners who did not meet the SOPs would not be able to complete the programme. The education provider had also demonstrated, via a document produced for the purpose, that they had an appropriate range of assessment methods, which would give learners opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in appropriately varied ways.
  - o Regarding the additional SETs, the education provider set out how they would work with the employers to ensure that assessment in the employer setting was objective, fair and reliable, and that progression requirements were clear. They also noted their academic appeals process and cited the policy document in which it was explained. We saw the Assessment and feedback policy, as well as the assessment brief template. There was an academic integrity policy in place, which the education provider made clear applied to all settings involving their learners, including apprentices. Evidence we saw earlier made it clear that there was also regular collaboration between the education provider and the employers at the operational level, and defined pathways for issues and problems to be discussed. We were therefore satisfied that the standards were met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Section 5: Referrals

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

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

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. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Section 6: 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 all standards are met, and therefore the programmes should be approved

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 programmes are approved.

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitors' recommendation that the programmes should receive approval.

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	University of Salford		
Case reference	CAS-01877-J4S5N6	Lead visitors	Jennifer Caldwell – occupational therapist, Joanne Stead – occupational therapist
Quality of provision			
Through this assessment, we have noted the programmes meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.			
Facilities provided			
• Libraries – the education provider has four main libraries across its campuses. All learners have access to these libraries and one of them is open 24 hours a day. • Private learning spaces – all the libraries offer dedicated breakout rooms where individual learners or groups of learners can undertake group work or hold seminars • Skills suites – the education provider has a number of simulation rooms and clinical learning areas which are used to teaching learners practical skills, and allowing them to practise their clinical competencies. • Learner support centre - The education provider's central support centre is called askUS. It acts as learners' first point of contact for information about the support services available, whether pastoral, academic, personal or social.			
Programmes			

Programme name	Mode of study	First intake date	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Degree Apprenticeship	Full time	September 2025	Apprenticeship
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy – Extended Route	Full time	September 2025	Taught (HEI)

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/1992
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/1994
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1999
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	PT (Part time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1999
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship	WBL (Work based learning)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2020
BSc (Hons) Podiatry	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/09/1993
BSc (Hons) Podiatry	WBL (Work based learning)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/09/2020
BSc (Hons) Prosthetics and Orthotics	FT (Full time)	Prosthetist / orthotist			01/01/1998
MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2019
MSc Podiatry	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/09/2015
Non Medical Prescribing - Independent Prescribing	FLX (Flexible)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing (Level 6)	FLX (Flexible)			Supplementary prescribing	01/02/2009
Non-Medical Prescribing (Level 7)	FLX (Flexible)			Supplementary prescribing	01/02/2009