

Approval process report

University of Essex, Physiotherapy, 2021-22

Executive summary

This report covers our review of the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship programme at the University of Essex. The education provider has demonstrated the programme has met our programme-level standards through documentary evidence. We considered all standards were met following an initial review of the submission, as such there was no need to engage with further quality activity. This report will now be considered by our Education and Training Panel who will make a final decision on programme approval.

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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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

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

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

Providers and programmes are <u>approved on an open-ended basis</u>, subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed <u>on our website</u>.

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 <u>partner visitors</u> 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 <u>on our website</u>.

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Karen Harrison	Lead visitor, Physiotherapist
Carol Rowe	Lead visitor, Physiotherapist
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 16 HCPC-approved programmes across 5 professions and one prescribing programme. It is a higher education institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2004.

The education provider is well-established in the East of England, delivering several HCPC approved provision across a number of Allied Health Professions (AHPs). They also have existing degree apprenticeship programmes. Their institutional policies are delivered across the institution by each school with a different approach in some cases, for apprentices. The education provider is one of the few selected providers that went through our performance review pilot. Following the review, our

partner visitors have recommended a 5-year review period which will be considered by our Education and Training Panel at their June 2022 meeting.

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 <u>Appendix 1</u> of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre- registration	Biomedical scientist	⊠Undergraduate	□Postgraduate	2007
	Occupational therapy	⊠Undergraduate	⊠Postgraduate	2006
	Physiotherapist	⊠Undergraduate	⊠Postgraduate	2004
	Practitioner psychologist	□Undergraduate	⊠Postgraduate	2005
	Speech and language therapist	⊠Undergraduate	⊠Postgraduate	2006
Post- registration	Independent Presc	2007		

Institution performance data

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

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

Data Point	Bench- mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	483	576	2022	The enrolled numbers of learners across all HCPC approved provision is a little higher than the approved intended numbers we have on our records. Through future assessments, we will continue to monitor this data point for us to determine adequate resources continue

				to be available for all learners.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	2%	2019/20	A score of 2% compared with the benchmark of 3% means this provider has a smaller percentage of learners not continuing their education at this institution which is positive.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	94%	2016/17	This data collected from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that graduates from this institution do well upon leaving the institution. This implies that compared with other providers with similar learner numbers and mode of delivery, the majority of learners who finish from this education provider go either into employment or further study.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Gold	2017	Although TEF has since stopped issuing awards, a Gold award is the highest possible award, which indicates quality of teaching is very high at this institution.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	73.8%	81.55%	2021	An NSS score of 81.5% is high compared to many other similar institutions. This would imply that learners at this institution are satisfied with the quality of learning and teaching.
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	N/A	2022	To be decided in the education provider's ongoing performance review process.

We did not consider any other data points from any other external sources during this assessment.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new

programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

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

Admissions

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

• Information for applicants – Information about the programme will be found on the education provider's webpage. Individual apprenticeship job vacancies will be advertised via University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the national Find an Apprenticeship web page and via internal partner employers recruitment processes, all of which detail the requirements for admission.

As an institution, general information and admissions policies apply to all prospective learners, subject to approved variations for specific programmes. Entry requirements for specific programmes are set out on the relevant programme page. However, a different approach is taken for apprentices as they use the direct application process rather than through University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). These institution-wide policies apply to the new proposed programme.

- Assessing English language, character, and health Assessing English language and understanding of NHS values requirements are set at programme level and align with existing BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy provision. Occupational Health (OH) and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements are set at institution level, informed by professional requirements, and will apply to the proposed provision. In addition, apprentices will be required to complete local employer OH processes.
- Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) Formal assessment of apprentices' prior experience is required as part of the apprenticeship recruitment process. This is referred to as an Initial Needs Assessment. The procedure maps the applicant's current experience with the knowledge, skills and behaviours detailed in the apprenticeship standard. The procedure includes reference to the education provider's accreditation of prior learning and experience (APEL) policy but is only relevant for apprentices. The proposed programme aligns with the institution wide APEL policy and the Initial Needs Assessment procedure.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion There is an institutional level policy which is delivered across the education provider by each School and applies to the new programme. The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is part of the provider's published academic admission criteria.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register¹ – As an institution, the education provider follows set processes by the HCPC and the professional body for physiotherapists – The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) and engage with quality assurance processes set by these bodies. There are also procedures in place to enable compliance set at university, school and programme levels. All of these will apply to the proposed programme in the same way as with their existing BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy provision.
- **Sustainability of provision** This is set at school and institution level and will apply to the proposed apprenticeship programme the same way it does to their existing BSc (Hons) and MSc Physiotherapy provision. The Physiotherapy programmes at this education provider form part of the School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences (SRES). The School operates within the education provider's financial sustainability model. As with the existing Physiotherapy programme, the new programme will remain a central part of the School's strategy and the education provider's Education strategy will further support increased levels of resources.
- Effective programme delivery All modules delivered have end of module evaluation and a module leader report is compiled to ensure ongoing reflection and development of delivery. Programme performance is scrutinised through Annual Review of Courses. The programme will also go through external examiner review. Procedures and polices associated with external examiners, annual review of programmes and student voice group are set at institution level and will apply to the proposed programme. Additionally, the proposed programme will fall under the review of the institution level Apprenticeship Advisory group and Apprenticeship Operations group who monitor delivery quality and ensure Ofsted compliance.
- Effective staff management and development The education provider has an institutional policy and strategy with regards to supporting staff. Staff are encouraged and supported in their continued professional development. Policies and procedures for supporting staff development are set at institution and school level and apply to all SRES staff. At programme level the education provider adopts a team-teaching approach whereby the physiotherapy team teach across all pre-registration programmes. All of these policies and procedures apply to the proposed provision.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** The education provider noted that there are no partnerships managed at institution level relevant to their HCPC approved programmes. Partnerships with employers and placement providers are managed at programme level.

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

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

- Academic quality School education committee reviews academic quality at modular and programme level. All undergraduate programmes undergo the education provider's annual review of programmes process. Procedures and policies to comply with the various academic quality monitoring activities are in place at education provider, school, departmental (Apprenticeship Hub) and programme levels and will apply to the new programme.
- Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments Programme committee as well Education committee regularly meet to ensure quality. There are half-way academic tutor visits during placements. Post placement feedback forms are completed by learners and practice educators. There are also biannual placement provider audits via electronic practice management system (PEMS). All of these procedures and policies are set at programme level for placement monitoring and will apply to the proposed provision. In addition, apprentices will have a regular tri-partite review which will include monitoring of the quality of practice-lead learning during apprentices' daily work. This proposed programme will also benefit from this procedure.
- Learner involvement There is an Institutional Policy which covers learner representation and voice. Processes and procedures include: Student voice group, student cohort reps, programme committee termly meetings and learner module feedback process. These processes and procedures are set at institution, school and programme level and will apply to the proposed programme.
- Service user and carer involvement This is delivered at School level rather than as an Institutional approach. The education provider has a Service Users Reference Group (SURG) which involves people with lived experience of impairments and long term health conditions. The expertise that is shared by people with lived experience helps learners in their understanding, so they are able to develop person centred and inclusive practices as a professional.

The SURG is run from the School of Health & Social Care, but the Physiotherapy team has a named member of academic staff on the group, who attends all meetings, and liaises with service users on matters concerning the Physiotherapy programmes. The new degree apprenticeship programme will also benefit from this arrangement.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

• **Support** – A Student support service is provided at institution level and supported at school and programme level by Personal Tutors Placement Support via practice education lead and visiting tutors.

Learners are supported by their practice education lead to articulate and negotiate any reasonable adjustments required in the work placement during placements. The education provider noted that they have a clear whistle blowing policy and learners are supported to enact this during practice placements also. Learners have opportunity to discuss any concerns about expectations to participate in practical teaching sessions and recording of assessments (e.g. viva's) at the start of their programmes and sign a consent form to participate. Apprentices are also supported by named work place mentors. All of these will apply to the new provision.

- Ongoing suitability The relevant policies and procedures are set at institutional level and applies to the proposed programme. There is a fitness to practise procedure policy in place to support programmes that include a practical professional placement and / or where successful completion can lead to registration with a professional / regulatory body. Apprentice professional suitability will also be kept under review via tripartite reviews and the proposed programme also aligns with this.
- Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) This is delivered at a School / programme level rather than as an institutional approach. Interprofessional learning features in all practice placements. Beyond inter-professional working experience in the workplace and during practice placements, apprentices will have the opportunity to learn about and consider the wider settings and professionals involved in healthcare. There are links with the School of Health & Social Care enable the School to facilitate shared learning experiences with other pre-registration healthcare learners, whilst learning from a range of other health profession academics. All of these apply to the proposed programme.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy is an institutional level policy which is delivered across the education provider by each School. The new programme will align with the provider's EDI policy delivered via the School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:

• **Objectivity** – This follows institutional level policies to which all schools and departments must adhere. Assessment is delivered in accordance with the University Assessment and Marking Policy which is set at institutional level and will apply to the new programme.

Institutional Policy about the role and responsibilities of the External Examiner assists with the maintenance of objectivity within assessment.

To ensure assessments are fair the education provider has an Extenuating circumstances and late submission policy. Marking girds, module handbooks and module materials are published at the start of a module

• **Progression and achievement** – Policies and procedures pertaining to learner progression and achievement, for example, the University rules of assessment, Exam Board, Attendance monitoring policy / process are set at institution level and will apply to the new programme.

Apprentice progression against expected academic and apprenticeship standard requirements are monitored regularly (termly) by formal tripartite review meetings (apprentice, education provider and employer representative). This will also apply to the new programme.

• **Appeals** – There are institutional level policies for both Academic Appeals and Complaints. The processes are independent from the School, to ensure no conflict of interests. These will apply to the new programme.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Outcomes from stage 1

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

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered	through this assessment
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Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist	10 learners, 1 cohort per year	01/10/2022

The degree apprenticeship is a proposed route through existing HCPC approved BSc and MSc pre-registration physiotherapy provision. Although the education provider had to demonstrate how the programme meets all of the programmespecific standards, the visitors could take some reassurance about how the new programme delivers our standards based on the existing approved programmes.

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

Following their initial review, the visitors noted that the proposed programme aligns with the existing approved Physiotherapy provision at this education provider in many ways, including curriculum, assessment and practice-based learning. The visitors also saw that there are specific processes and procedures in place to support effective delivery of degree apprenticeships as there are existing approved BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Apprenticeship) and BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy (Apprenticeship) programmes. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that all standards are met and that no quality activity was required.

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.

Overall findings on how standards are met

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

Findings of the assessment panel:

- SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- SET 2: Programme admissions -
 - Individual apprenticeship job vacancies are advertised via UCAS (although learners do not apply through UCAS), through the national 'Find an apprenticeship webpage and via internal partner employers recruitment processes.
 - English language requirements, and an understanding of NHS values as outlined in the NHS Constitution are assessed through personal statement and interview.
 - Occupational Health (OH) and Disclosure and Barring Service requirements are all set at an appropriate level. Formal assessment of apprentice's prior experience is required as part of the apprenticeship recruitment process, and apprentices are also required to complete local employer OH processes.
 - Academic entry levels for apprenticeships are adjusted to accommodate prior experience and learning, and in line with other similar apprenticeship programmes.

The visitors were therefore satisfied that the selection and entry criteria include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

• SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership – <u>Partnerships and placement availability</u>

- The visitors saw collaboration between the education provider and employers in the East Suffolk and North Essex to develop the new programme.
- They noted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with all partners to collaborate on the development of, recruitment to and delivery of the placement aspects of the programme.
- In addition, there are existing and ongoing meetings attended by representatives from the provider and other providers within the region to discuss practice education.
- The numbers of new recruits to the programme is relatively modest with a proposed intake of ten learners per year which is less than 15% increase in learner numbers on the existing provision.
- There already are existing links with physiotherapy placement providers for the existing Physiotherapy provisions.
- There is a designated Practice Lead whose role involves securing, optimising and monitoring placements.

As such, the visitors were satisfied that there is effective collaboration between the education provider and their practice education providers and that this would ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning.

Resources

- There are ten full HCPC registered academic physiotherapy staff in post with other staff members available to provide additional support, all of whom will be contributing to this programme alongside other duties, including the other HCPC approved provision.
- There is evidence that a pool of knowledge and expertise for the sound delivery of Physiotherapy programme already exists, with the existing approved Physiotherapy programme.
- The Physiotherapy provision has good complement of laboratories and other relevant resources. Apprentices have access to the standard and comprehensive library facilities of the education provider.

Therefore, the visitors were satisfied saw that there is adequate staff and physical resources in place to deliver the programme effectively and were assured that standards within this area are met.

• SET 4: Programme design and delivery –

- The visitors noted that the learning outcomes were appropriately mapped to the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists. They saw sufficient evidence that the programme ensures that graduates can meet our standards of proficiency and understand the expectations and responsibilities associated with being a regulated professional.
- The design of the curriculum, with a strong work-based element, helps to ensure that the programme content is responsive to developments in the workplace.

- The underpinning structure of the programme, with a 60% 40% split between employer 'on-the-job' and academic and placement and offthe-job' learning demonstrates practice and theory are well integrated.
- The curriculum model includes a central theme of developing reflective practice. Learners are encouraged to be active participants in the learning process and to develop capabilities of critical thinking which underpin autonomous practice. There is emphasis on research and evidence practice.

Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that standards around the design and delivery of the programme are met.

• SET 5: Practice-based learning -

- The nature of the development of this programme means that practicebased learning is integral to the operation of the programme, as the apprentices are themselves employees. The education provider collaborates with all practice partners on the development of, recruitment to and the delivery of the placement aspects of the programme.
- Evidence was provided to demonstrate that learners in years 2,3 and 4 complete four practice placements outside their employing teams. These four placements provide appropriate structure, duration, and range of practice-based learning, to support achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs.
- Placement providers complete a biennial audit which demonstrates that they have sufficient appropriately trained staff to support the number of placements that they offer.
- There are already existing systems for the recruitment, training, support and monitoring of physiotherapy placement education, which has already been approved by HCPC.
- The visitors saw sufficient evidence to demonstrate that practicebased learning is delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced staff and that it supports the achievement of the learning outcomes and the SOPs.

The visitors were therefore satisfied that the standards in SET 5 are met.

• SET 6: Assessment –

- All module assessments tools are mapped directly onto learning outcomes, which in turn are designed to ensure that the apprentice is fit for practice and enabling eligibility for registration with the HCPC.
- Professional behaviour and upholding standards of conduct, performance and ethics are assessed directly during placements.

- There is an escalating process for monitoring and managing unacceptable performance, and if required the education provider has a clear process for managing Fitness to Practise.
- A range of assessment tools are utilised across the programme, which reflect the different nature and levels of professional knowledge and skills required for practice as a physiotherapist as they are delivered across the curriculum.
- The visitors saw sufficient evidence demonstrating that assessments are structured in a way that would allow learners meet the SOPs for physiotherapists and understand the expectations of being a regulated professional, upon successful completion of the programme.

Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the standards in SET 6 are met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review:

The education provider consistently delivers to a very high standard, as evidenced by a range of external benchmarks and quality measures. Therefore, they have both the resources and the experience of delivering high quality health provision, including physiotherapy. They also have had experience of previously running an inservice physiotherapy route, which is in essence a pre-cursor to a modern apprenticeship. Plus, they already have a range of other apprenticeships running in the School, and this acts as an additional resource for the learners.

The visitors noted the exceptional quality of the programme proposal, and the comprehensive documentation and design of the apprenticeship curriculum which demonstrated strong alignment with our standards.

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 programme should be approved.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences (Applied)	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/10/2019
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	PT (Part time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2006
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Apprenticeship)	PT (Part time)	Occupational therapist			03/10/2022
MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre- registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2010
Post Graduate Diploma in Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2010
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/08/2017
MSc Physiotherapy (pre registration)	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2004
Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2013
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychol	ogist	01/01/2005
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/10/2018
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy (Apprenticeship)	PT (Part time)	Speech and language therapist			03/10/2022

BSc (Hons) Speech and	FT (Full time)	Speech and language		01/10/2018
Language Therapy		therapist		
(Including Placement				
Year)				
BSc (Hons) Speech and	FT (Full time)	Speech and language		01/10/2018
Language Therapy		therapist		
(Including Year Abroad)				
MSc Speech and	FTA (Full time	Speech and language		01/09/2006
Language Therapy (pre	accelerated)	therapist		
registration)				
Post Graduate Diploma	FTA (Full time	Speech and language		01/09/2013
in Speech and	accelerated)	therapist		
Language Therapy				
Practice Certificate in	PT (Part time)		Supplementary	01/01/2019
Supplementary and			prescribing;	
Independent Prescribing			Independent	
for PHs, CHs, RAs and			prescribing	
PAs				