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## Approval process report

### University of Hertfordshire, Speech and Language Therapy, 2023-24

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#### Executive Summary

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

We have

- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area
- Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the institution / programme(s) should be approved
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme(s) are approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted

- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

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Previous consideration	Not applicable. The approval process was not referred from another process
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• whether the programme(s) are approved</li></ul>
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The provider's next performance review will be in the 2026-27 academic year</li></ul>

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## Section 1: About this assessment

### About us

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

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

### Our standards

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

### Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

### The approval process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Esther Jolliff	Acting Lead visitor, Speech and Language Therapist
Fiona McCullough	Lead visitor, Dietitian
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer

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

### **The education provider context**

The education provider currently delivers 15 HCPC-approved programmes across seven professions. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1993. These include two post-registration programmes for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotations.

Alongside the Speech and Language Therapy provision, the education provider is also seeking approval of degree apprenticeships in Dietetics, and Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiography provision. These are being considered in separate cases because they had different document submission dates which meant the cases could not be managed as one.

In 2023, the education provider engaged with the approval review process for the MSc Paramedic Science (Pre-registration), full time accelerated programme. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards were met, and that the programme was approved by the Education and Training Committee in June 2024.

In the 2021-22 academic year, the education provider engaged with the performance review process. The outcome of this was that the education provider was performing well across all areas and there were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process. The Education and Training Committee decided that the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process will be in the 2026-27 academic year.

The education provider also engaged with the approval process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2021 to introduce their MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration), Full time accelerated, and the MSc Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging (Pre registration), Full time accelerated programmes. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards were met, and the programmes were approved by the Education and Training Committee in August 2021.

They engaged with the major change process in 2021 to introduce the BSc (Hons) Dietetics with a Year Abroad to their existing, approved BSc (Hons) Dietetics programme. The new programme was an opportunity given to learners to undertake a study abroad year between levels 5 and 6 and became available to learners in the 2020-21 academic year. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the Education and Training Committee agreed the programme remains approved in April 2021.

The education provider had completed a periodic review of the MA Art Therapy, Full time, and Part time programmes. They engaged with the major change process in 2021 to report the changes. As a result, the part time programme would be spread over four years, rather than three. Part-time versions of full-time modules would no longer be available, and learning outcomes were amended and reflected in the standards of proficiency. There were also new module learning outcomes, and changes to delivery and assessment. We were satisfied that there was sufficient evidence that the standards continued to be met, and the Education and Training Committee agreed the programme remains approved in July 2021.

## Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Arts therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2002
	Dietitian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2006
	Occupational therapy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2021
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2004
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1993
	Practitioner psychologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2000
	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2000
<b>Post-registration</b>	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2006

## 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	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	1362	1422	2023/24	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

				<p>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.</p> <p>We are satisfied the education provider continues to recruit learners to their programmes as expected.</p>
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	15%	2020-21	<p>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.</p> <p>The data point is significantly above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year’s data point, the education provider’s performance has dropped by 9%.</p> <p>This is being explored through another approval process which the education provider is currently undergoing.</p>
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	92%	92%	2021-22	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects</p>

				<p>The data point is equal to the benchmark, which suggests the provider's performance in this area is in line with sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 4%.</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the data shows the education provider is still performing at sector norms.</p>
Learner positivity score	77.0%	82.8%	2023	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 6%</p> <p>We did not explore this data point through this assessment because there is evidence that the education provider is performing well in this area.</p>
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	N/A	2026-27	<p>The education provider engaged with the performance review process in 2021-22 academic year. The outcome of this was that</p>



				they were performing well across all areas and as such they received the maximum review period of five years.
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## The route through stage 1

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

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

### Admissions

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

- **Information for applicants –**
  - The education provider noted that information regarding the programme will be made available on their website. This will include a copy of the Programme Specification and Course Factsheet documents. Details of the teaching, learning and assessment methods will be published in these documents.
  - As the programme is a degree apprenticeship, information will also be available to applicants through employers, webinars and engagement events.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this because the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health –**
  - The education provider noted that English language competency will be assessed through the attainment of relevant qualifications, for example GCSE English. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of Level 2 English and Maths before they can be offered a place on the programme.
  - Applicants will be required to have a current Disclosure Barring service (DBS) check and an Occupational Health check. As this is a degree apprenticeship, the employer will be responsible for these.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the institution functions.
  - We think this because the education provider has noted there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L) –**

- The education provider noted they have an established process to assess Recognition of Prior Learning through their Flexible Credit Framework which provides advice in relation to application and assessment for AP(E)L. They noted this process is detailed in their Apprenticeship Policy and is delivered via their Apprenticeship management System, Aptem.
- As part the onboarding processes, all applicants to the programme will have an initial needs assessment prior to the start of the programme to assess their prior learning. This will help to ensure that all learning on the programme is new learning.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this because the education provider has noted that there are no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - There is equality, diversity and inclusion information available on the education provider’s website. The information demonstrates the education provider’s aim to ensure that the admission and recruitment process ensures that no one receives less favourable treatment because of characteristics protected by UK legislation.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the institution runs.
  - We think this because the education provider has informed us there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.

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

#### Management and governance

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

- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register<sup>1</sup> –**
  - The education provider’s internal validation process helps to ensure all aspects of the programme including aims, learning outcome and programme specification; curriculum design, currency of content and organisation; learner guidance and learner support etc have been considered.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Sustainability of provision –**
  - The education provider noted they have a Continuous Enhancement Planning (CEP) process that supports the quality assurance of their taught programmes and enhances the learner experience through

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

incremental and focused improvement. The CEP supports programme teams in:

- maintaining academic standards;
  - improving the quality of learning opportunities;
  - enhancing the learner learning experience by an ongoing, evidence informed monitoring process; and
  - allowing school and education provider oversight to identify and develop strategic improvement initiatives.
- As part of ensuring the sustainability of provision, all programmes offered by the education provider and their collaborative partners undergo a process of periodic review every six years. Through this process, re-development and re-approval of the programme is done.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Effective programme delivery –**
    - All of the above as noted under Sustainability of provision also help to ensure effective programme delivery.
    - In addition, the education provider has a Student Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG) which is a group of academic data experts that consider all university-level and subject-level learner entry and performance-related data. This also includes data on provision delivered by its collaborative partners.
    - Programme Specifications, and Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports consider the management of the programme and support for learner learning; external examiner reports; module and programme outcomes; and learner feedback.
    - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
    - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Effective staff management and development –**
    - Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures ensure advice on people management issues is available from a dedicated HR Business Partner. The education provider's appraisal policy ensures new academic staff undergo a 12-month probation period. All staff then take part in an annual appraisal process.
    - The education provider's HR Learning and Organisational Development helps to ensure staff have access to a wide range of professional and personal development. This is done through a staff development process and access to the resources offered by the Learning and Organisational Development team and Centre for Learning, Access and Student Success (CLASS).
    - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level –**
  - The education provider noted this is not applicable, meaning there are no partnerships relating to the new programmes which are managed at the institution level.
  - The education provider has structures and processes that support partnerships which are managed at institution level. These include Collaborative Partnerships, Handbook and Apprentices, Partner Approval, Placement Agreement, and National Education & Training Survey.
  - The education provider noted they have a recognised process for considering and managing collaborative partners both overseas and in the UK. Each collaborative partner has an identified University Link Tutor to provide support and guidance.
  - There is a legal signed placement agreement in place with each provider that supports learners on placements. Health and Social Care learners engage with the National Education & Training Survey providing feedback on their respective placement experience
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.

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

#### Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

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

- **Academic quality –**
  - Continuous Enhancement Planning, Structure and assessment regulations – undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, Programme Specifications, Student and Applicant Complaints are some of the policies and processes that the education provider uses to ensure academic quality.
  - Structure and assessment regulations – undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes are developed to give effect to a resolution by the Academic Board that Common Assessment Regulations and a Common Academic Structure should be adopted for all taught programmes, modules and credit-bearing short courses capable of leading to awards at the education provider.
  - Programme staff are supported day-to-day in all matters of academic quality by an Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality). The University Centre for Academic Quality Assurance provides oversight of all academic quality matters.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –**
  - The Placement Audit Tool, Practice Complaints Policy and Placement Feedback surveys are the policies and procedures that the education provider uses to ensure practice quality.
  - There is a health placements team that supports the administration of placements. There is a placement agreement in place with all the Trusts and private, independent and voluntary organisations (PIVOs) that provide placements. This agreement outlines both party's responsibilities, including quality of placement and safety.
  - Monitoring of placement provision is led by the Clinical Lead with oversight from the Associate Dean (Academic Quality Assurance).
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Learner involvement –**
  - Student Representatives are appointed each year to represent learners' academic interests. They will listen to their peers' feedback on academic issues and work in partnership with academic staff to improve and enhance the programme. The representatives will be members of the Programme Committee, ensuring the learner voice is heard.
  - Health & Social Care learners use the National Education and Training survey as a mechanism to provide feedback on their practice placements and is managed at National level.
  - Programme level audit is another mechanism to collect learner feedback on their practice placement experience. Learners can also complete the Student Voice questionnaire for each module to provide their feedback.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement –**
  - The education provider has a Service User and Public Involvement (SUPI) strategy. This ensures service users are engaged in the development of the programme which may include focus groups or as members of the Development Committee from the outset of the development.
  - The education provider noted that service user and carer involvement will be embedded through the programmes including appropriate

teaching and learning experiences, assessments and programme monitoring and evaluation.

- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.

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

### Learners

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

- **Support –**
  - There is a wide range of support available to learners on these programmes. Some of these include Student wellbeing which supports learners with any emotional, mental health, disability and health related issues which they may experience throughout their time at the education provider.
  - Other support provided include accommodation support, student safety, medical centre, financial support, carer and parent support, careers and employment service, chaplaincy, and student union.
  - At programme level, learners will be supported by a Year Tutor, and a named personal tutor.
  - Academic skills advice is available within the School and at the education provider level provided by the Student Success and Academic Skills team.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Ongoing suitability –**
  - The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedure ensures learners declare to their employer, who work in partnership with the education provider to deliver the programme. The declaration would provide information that shows if the learner has acquired a positive record related to any criminal activity which is after their initial DBS enhanced disclosure.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E) –**
  - The education provider noted their IPE strategy in the School of Health & Social Work which details the IPE provision and expectations for all programmes leading to professional registration. There is an IPE

steering group that ensures adherence to the strategy, shares good practices, and develops new IPE activities within the school.

- The education provider also noted that inter-professional learning will be embedded through the programme and opportunities to learn together and about other professions will be a feature of the programme as it is developed.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion –**
  - The education provider has an Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy which ensures they are committed to advancing equality of opportunity, embracing and celebrating the diversity of their community, and fostering a cohesive and inclusive culture.
  - Best practice EDI principles are embedded into teaching and learning activities and learners on the programme will be able to contact the education provider's EDI team.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.

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

### Assessment

**Findings on alignment with existing provision:**

- **Objectivity –**
  - The Assessments and Examinations (undergraduate and taught postgraduate) and conferment is a policy that is set at institution level and applies to all programmes. The policy provides information around the setting, review, submission, marking and moderation of examinations and assessments.
  - Regulations and Procedures relating to the setting, review, submission, marking and moderation of examinations and assessments ensure learners are “assessed effectively” in accordance with the expectations of the Office for Students Ongoing Condition of Registration B4. This means the learners are assessed in a challenging and appropriately comprehensive way, consistent with the level of study.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Progression and achievement –**

- The education provider noted that results of assessments will be considered by a Module and Programme Board of Examiners. We understood this process ratifies and confirms academic credit attained, to enable the Exam Board to determine the learner's progress to the next year of study (if appropriate), or an academic award as appropriate.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.
- **Appeals –**
  - Assessments and Examinations - Regulations for Students (including requests for the review of assessment decisions (Appeals Procedure)) (University - delivered provision) is the policy that ensures learners are made aware of the informal and formal appeals process. This information will also be provided in their Programme Handbook.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there will be no changes to how the new programme meets this area.

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

### **Outcomes from stage 1**

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

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

- The programme will share laboratory space with the Occupational Therapy degree apprenticeship programme. The education provider noted the resources will be in place by autumn of 2024.
- Additional staff are being recruited and will be in place prior to the start of the programme.

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

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None.

## Section 3: Programme-level assessment

### **Programmes considered through this assessment**



Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy  (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Speech and Language Therapist	20 learners, 1 cohort	20/01/2025

## 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.

## 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](#).

### Quality theme 1 – ensuring staff in practice-based learning are appropriately trained to support and develop learners

**Area for further exploration:** The education provider noted that they will provide employers and their staff with training. The visitors were aware that the model of apprenticeship usually ensures staff in practice-based learning are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, as part of their review, they needed to receive information relating to this so they could understand how the staff will be trained and supported. This was so that they could determine if staff in practice-based learning were able to support and develop learners in a safe and effective way. The visitors therefore requested that the education provider submit further evidence that would reassure us that staff in practice-based learning will have the training and the support they require to be able to support and develop learners.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this through email correspondence as we considered this the most appropriate way to receive the clarification needed.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider referred to their Practice Provider Engagement Strategy which outlines their training plan, points of contact throughout practice-based learning, proposed engagement events and awards, as well as feedback on practice-based learning. They noted their Practice Educator Handbook also outlines further support and expectations. The education provider explained the role of practice educators and workplace mentors. We understood practice educators support and assess learners in practice-based learning while workplace mentors support the learner at their place of work to implement the learning from the education provider into their daily practice. They also attend the tripartite reviews between the learner and the employer liaison tutor from the education provider to monitor the learner's progress and ongoing development.

The education provider explained that training for new practice educators will be provided before each placement block, with refresher sessions two to three times a year. Link Visits with the academic team will occur midway through practice-based learning to ensure smooth progress, with additional visits arranged if concerns arise.

They also noted the Apprenticeship on Programme Employer's Handbook will be shared with workplace mentors at the start, with their proposed plan to develop a new Workplace/ Work based Mentor website. We understood online training for new mentors and support through tripartite review meetings will be offered, with Personal Tutors also serving as Employer Liaison Tutors for consistency.

It was clear from the education provider's response how staff in practice-based learning will be supported. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the response had adequately addressed their concerns.

## Quality theme 2 – ensuring a range of experience in practice-based learning

**Area for further exploration:** We noted sufficient hours and appropriate supervision were detailed in the programme specification. However, there was lack of detail on the education provider's plan to vary the setting for various groups of service users especially between paediatrics and adults to ensure learners have access to an appropriate range of practice-based learning experiences. The visitors considered this important in order for the learners to be able to achieve the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency for speech and language therapists. Therefore, we requested that the education provider submit more detail on how they will monitor and ensure a range of experiences (settings / client- groups) are achieved by the learners.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this through email correspondence as we considered this the most appropriate way to receive the clarification needed.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider explained they have a new Placement Lead who will work alongside the wider team. We understood the Placement Lead and Administrative Team will use the placement planning spreadsheet to track learners and ensure that practice-based learning is monitored appropriately with appropriate range between settings and client groups in line with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) Curriculum Guidance 2021. We also understood that, where possible, between the learners' place of work, reciprocal practice-based learning will be arranged to ensure learners achieve all the required knowledge, skills and behaviours. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's response adequately addressed their concern.

Quality theme 3 – ensuring varied assessment at level 4 and adequate support for learners who may struggle with academic writing

**Area for further exploration:** Overall, there was a varied assessment diet detailed in the Programme Handbook and Programme Specification. The visitors however noted a concern around the assessment at level 4. They noted there was only one piece of written coursework required at this level. The visitors considered that this may be a missed opportunity for building foundational academic skills such as academic writing and referencing which could increase the chances of success at later stages of the programme. In addition, the visitors requested to know how learners who struggle with this aspect were supported.

**Quality activities agreed to explore theme further:** We explored this through email correspondence as we considered this the most appropriate way to receive the clarification needed.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider explained in detail the different factors which have influenced their decision to use a varied assessment framework at level 4. These include:

- Supporting Diverse Learning Needs
- Relevance to Workplace Responsibilities
- Minimising Artificial Intelligence (AI) Content Use
- Early Support for Academic Writing

The education provider explained that of the five level 4 modules, three involve academic writing in the first year. Learners are encouraged to submit a 500-word draft for formative feedback before the final submission. Other modules with academic writing are Psychology and Language Development 4HSK2063 (poster presentation) and Applied Anatomy and Physiology for SLT Apprentices 4HSK2062 (short answer questions). We understood Phonetics and Linguistics 4HSK2064 focuses on the scientific study of language, with assessments identifying additional support needs. They noted all assessments include formative opportunities, and staff will monitor and address any writing concerns.

With regard to support for academic writing, the education provider discussed several resources they have in place to support learners who may struggle in this area. Some of the resources include:

- Study Needs Agreement – learners with recognised learning differences can self-refer for this to identify reasonable adjustments and personalised support.
- Initial Support - learners can talk to their personal tutor, programme leader, or cohort leader for initial guidance.
- Draft Submissions - learners will be encouraged to submit formative drafts of up to 500 words for feedback on each assignment.
- University-Wide Study Success Hubs
- Library SkillUP and other resources

The visitors were satisfied that learners would have access to a variety of academic writing at level 4 and that there is appropriate support for those who may struggle with this. Following the quality activity the visitors had no further concerns.

## 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.

### 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**
  - Entry requirements are clearly detailed in the programme specification. For example, applicants are expected to have two GCSE Sciences at Grade 4 (C grade). This can be obtained from either a Double Award Science or Single Science and Additional Science or any two from Science or Arts subjects.

- The education provider noted all criteria include both academic requirements and professional standards. We understood these aligned with apprenticeship standards for entry and meet the education provider's degree entry requirements.
- The visitors noted the entry criteria also detailed consideration of equivalent qualifications.
- The visitors were satisfied that the relevant standard within this SET has been met based on the information provided.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership –**
  - The education provider noted ongoing collaboration between themselves and employers. They noted regular collaboration through Programme Committee Meetings (PCM) and their twelve weekly tripartite progression meetings (TPM). These meetings help to ensure the views of employers are heard and discussed and any actions required are implemented.
  - The education provider noted they have a strong partnership with the Herts and West Essex Allied Health Professions (AHP) Council who has supported the new development from the outset. The education provider plans to expand their apprenticeship partnerships across the East of England, London, and beyond. They noted their central apprenticeship team handles marketing and maintains relationships with over 250 employers.
  - The visitors noted progress reviews take place four times yearly for each learner between the education provider, work-based mentor and the learner which help to monitor learners' progress.
  - The apprenticeship model supports capacity and availability of practice-based learning as reciprocal recognition is recommended between employers. We understood practice-based learning will be monitored by the Visiting Academic Tutors who act as the link between practice education providers and the education provider.
  - The education provider noted four staff members were to be appointed in May 2024 (we understood these were appointed in September 2024) and there is plan to train up the programme leader in the first year. The curriculum vitae provided a wide range of areas of clinical expertise and experience. We understood Visiting Lecturers and Experts by Experience will support the programme for specialist areas where required.
  - The visitors noted that collectively, the teaching team possess a range of areas of clinical expertise and experience and there is the possibility to bring in additional teaching for particular areas.
  - Regarding resources to support learning, the education provided noted that the online learning platform will be accessible to all learners and educators. They noted it will provide information about the platform's role and support mechanisms for those with additional requirements. We understood dedicated website will support learners' academic skills and specialist staff will also be available if needed.

- From the evidence submitted the visitors were satisfied that all the standards within this SET area are met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery –**
  - The standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping demonstrated that all learning outcomes have been mapped to the HCPC SOPs which provided reassurance that learners will be able to meet the SOPs for speech and language therapists upon successful completion of the programme.
  - Similarly, learning outcomes have been clearly mapped to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs). This showed that learners will be able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the SCPEs, by the time they complete the programme. In addition, the information provided in the Programme Handbook and Programme Specification demonstrated how learners will meet expectations relating to professionalism and behaviour.
  - The programme handbook includes required knowledge, skills and behaviours within learning outcomes. Hence it includes and reflects the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base articulated in relevant curriculum guidance.
  - The education provider noted that modules will use patient scenarios to encourage learners to apply enquiry-based learning and that learners will need to search the current evidence base and discuss appropriate, expected, or innovative ideas for patient management. The visitors also noted that the curriculum has been recently developed with input from practice providers.
  - Integration of theory and practice is embedded in the curriculum and supported through the apprenticeship model. We understood the learning outcomes of the modules include both theoretical knowledge and practical demonstrations and all practice-based learning criteria focus on developing these theoretical and practical applications.
  - A range of learning and teaching methods were provided including pre-recorded online materials, synchronous discussion sessions (both online and face-to-face), and practical sessions to ensure effective delivery. The visitors considered these effective to the delivery of the learning outcomes.
  - The Transition to Speech and Language Therapy Apprentice and the Leadership and Autonomous Practice for Speech and Language Therapy Apprentices modules demonstrate how the programme will ensure learners become autonomous and reflective practitioners. The education provider noted learners will engage in reflective tasks to understand the theory and significance of reflection in academic modules.
  - Evidence based practice is introduced at level 4 and embedded through the programme both in the theory and practice-based learning.
  - The visitors were satisfied that the curriculum demonstrates that learners who complete the programme will meet our standards for their

professional knowledge and skills and will be fit to practise. Therefore, the visitors determined that all standards within this SET area are met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning –**

- The evidence submitted showed there are three six-week block practice-based learning which will provide up to 90 practice-based learning days (180 sessions), in addition to on-the-job learning opportunities. The visitors considered this exceeds the RCSLT recommendation of 75 days (150 sessions). The visitors considered that practice-based learning is integral to the programme.
- The education provider noted practice-based learning is designed to follow a period of theoretical learning and is in addition to the learners' contracted workplace hours. We understood learners will need to work a minimum of 30 hours a week to be able to undertake the programme.
- From the quality activity request as noted in [quality theme 2](#) above, clarification was received on how the education provider will ensure learners have access to a range of experiences (settings/client groups) and how this will be monitored.
- The education provider noted that practice-based learning provision is monitored at regular meetings by the Practice Lead / Co-ordinator. We understood the education provider will provide work-based mentors and practice partners / employers with training.
- We understood learners will be supported by work-based mentors in practice-based learning. The work-based mentors will liaise with employer liaison tutors in the team to ensure learners are supported and developed in a safe and effective way. Practice educators will liaise with visiting academic tutors when the apprentice is in practice-based learning. This ensures that learners are supported and developed in a safe and effective way.
- As outlined in [quality theme 1](#), details of the training and support available to practice educators were provided to ensure they continue to be appropriately suited to support learners in practice.
- From the information provided in the initial submission and with the response to quality activities, the visitors were satisfied that the programme level standards within this SET area have been met.

- **SET 6: Assessment –**

- The visitors noted a varied assessment diet detailed in the Programme Handbook and Programme Specification. The education provider noted that the assessment strategy aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of speech and language therapy and broader healthcare professional skills and meet the relevant SOPs. The education provider also noted the assessment strategy will help the learners to build further transferable skills and meet the Apprenticeship Standards.
- As detailed in [quality theme 3](#), we received adequate clarification to understand how learners will engage with, and be supported, in relation to academic writing and referencing in particular at level 4.

- Details provided in the Programme Handbook and Programme Specification demonstrate how the programme will ensure learners are able to demonstrate that they understand the expectations associated with being a regulated professional by the time they complete the programme.
- The education provider noted the programme's learning outcomes include professional behaviours and values, with clear expectations set from the first module. They noted various modules' assessment outcomes require learners to demonstrate their ability to meet professional practice standards and professionalism and behaviour are crucial for passing each practice-based learning.
- The education provider also noted there is a variety of assessment methods to build transferable skills whilst ensuring the assessment method is relevant to the learning outcome.
- The visitors were satisfied the evidence provided as well as the response submitted to the quality activity request demonstrate that all standards within this SET area have been 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 programme 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 programme 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	Case reference	Lead visitors	Quality of provision	Facilities provided
University of Hertfordshire	CAS-01546-Z5R3K5	Esther Jolliff Fiona McCullough	Through this assessment, we have noted the education provider and / or programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.	Education and training delivered by this institution is underpinned by the provision of the following key facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme will share laboratory space with the Occupational Therapy degree apprenticeship programme. The education provider noted the resources will be in place by autumn of 2024. apprenticeship programme.</li> <li>Additional staff are being recruited and will be in place prior to the start of the programme</li> </ul>
Programmes				
Programme name			Mode of study	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapist			WBL (Work based learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprenticeship</li> </ul>

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
MA Art Therapy	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Art therapy		01/09/2002
MA Art Therapy	PT (Part time)	Arts therapist	Art therapy		01/09/2002
BSc (Hons) Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/09/2006
BSc (Hons) Dietetics with a Year Abroad	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational therapist			01/01/2021
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2004
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1993
MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2022
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/01/2000
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/09/2000
MSc Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging (Pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer		01/01/2022
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer		01/09/2000
Practice Certificate in Supplementary Prescribing for Diagnostic Radiographers and Dietitians	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/01/2017
Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2018