Approval process report

University of Wolverhampton, Paramedic (degree apprenticeship), 2023-24

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve a paramedic programme at the University of Wolverhampton. 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
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme(s) should be approved
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme is approved

Through this assessment, we have noted:
- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval process was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide: • whether the programme(s) is / are approved
Next steps	Outline next steps / future case work with the provider: • The provider's next performance review will be in the 2027-28 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(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:

Paul Bates	Lead visitor, paramedic
Wendy Smith	Lead visitor, chiropody / podiatry
John Archibald	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 14 HCPC-approved programmes across six professions. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2004. This includes two post-registration programmes for independent prescribing and supplementary prescribing annotations.

The proposed programme is an apprenticeship programme. The education provider currently runs a HCPC-approved degree apprenticeship programme in occupational therapy.

West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) are the employer who provide the practice education for this proposed paramedic programme. Learners will only be undertaking practice-based learning with their employer WMAS at their normal place of work. Practice educators are known as 'mentors'. The proposed programme will replace the currently approved BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (Professional Pathway) programme. The programme is taught at the education provider's Telford campus.

The education provider engaged with the performance review process with our quality assurance process in 2022. We were satisfied there was sufficient evidence the standards continued to be met and recommended the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process would be in the 2027-28 academic year. The Education and Training Committee agreed with this recommendation in August 2023.

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	Biomedical scientist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2010
	Chiropodist / podiatrist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2021
	Occupational therapy	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2021
	Paramedic	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2015
	Physiotherapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2017
	Practitioner psychologist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2004
Post-registration	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	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	639	739	2024-25	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. We assessed whether the education provider has the resources in place for the proposed programme and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	5%	2020-21	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 dropped by 2%. We reviewed the learner experience at the education provider and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	98%	2020-21	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 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 2%. We reviewed learner's experience on the programme and potential for progression and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	80.2%	77.0%	2024	This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is below 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 7%. We explored the learner experience and were satisfied with the information provided by the education provider.
HCPC performance review cycle length	n/a	n/a	2027-28	The education provider's next performance review is in five years' time. This decision was made in 2022-23.

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** –
  - o The education provider's Admissions Policy and Process (2023) is followed during the admissions process. Entry requirements are available on a programme's webpage.
  - o Applicants apply once they are sent a link to complete an application. The employer informs the education provider which applicants they wish to enrol on the programme
  - o Applicants must be employed within an appropriate healthcare setting and have the support of their employer for the duration of the programme. If a learner is made redundant during their studies, depending on how much of their programme they have completed, they may be able to self-fund to continue.
  - o Learners must have at least five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs) including Maths, English and a science at grade C+ / 4 or above or equivalent qualifications. They must have an A-level qualification or equivalent level 3 qualification.

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - o International English Language Testing System (IELTS) language requirements are advertised on programmes' webpages. All HCPC-approved programmes undertake values-based interviews with applicants before offering a place. Where English is not an applicant's first language, assessment is undertaken during the admissions process to confirm they either possess an appropriate IELTS or equivalent certificate or possess a master's degree completed in a UK institution.
  - o Applicant suitability is carried out by the education provider's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) team through an enhanced DBS clearance.
  - o Assessment of health is undertaken through the Occupational Health (OH) Service. Applicants accepted onto programmes complete a 'fitness to train' questionnaire, which is provided to the OH team. The OH team follow up any self-declarations. Information and timescales for vaccinations are provided for learners who have practice education in NHS settings.
  - o The education provider holds an interview with the employer and applicant.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - o Learners must meet the requirements for entry as stated on the Course Specification Template.
  - o Applicants need to submit an academic piece and will be asked questions during their interview, related to their experience in professionally related roles.
  - o Applicants will not automatically be rejected if their grades are lower than expected, and if they have a guarantee from their employer. Applicants prior learning is taken into consideration in the recruitment process.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** –
  - o The education provider is fully committed to equality and eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination. The EDI committee monitors whether the education provider is fulfilling its obligations.

- All staff involved in the admissions process need to complete EDI training. Reasonable adjustments are made for applicants where necessary, and those applicants are supported by the education provider's inclusion team. Applicants are asked at interview about any additional learning needs. The education provider carries out an initial assessment review which identifies any additional needs.
- All staff complete mandatory EDI training. The education provider has a Speak Up policy which supports learners with discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet 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[1]** –
  - The education provider is responsible for academic standards and quality of programmes and awards. Regulations specify award titles, and information regarding the standards for each award.
  - Programmes' content is mapped to the standards of proficiency (SOPs) and knowledge, skills and behaviours. This is demonstrated to the Office for Standard in Education, Children's Service and Skills (Ofsted) as part of the monitoring process. The programme meet the funding terms set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
  - The education provider is registered with the Office for Students as having degree awarding powers. There is continuous monitoring to ensure the programme meets apprenticeship accountability requirements.
  - Apprenticeship leads within the faculty meet quarterly to discuss recruitment, employer events, quality of the programme, engagement, quality assurance etc.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision** –
  - University Strategy 2035 outlines the vision, purpose, and values that underpin programmes. The strategy requires the education provide to ensure inclusivity is at the heart of learning. The strategy sets out the

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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

aim to recruit ambitious learners from all backgrounds, to inspire and support them to achieve.

- o Schools have monthly senior leadership meetings which examine critical performance indicators across programmes. This includes examination of data on recruitment, progression, attention, outcomes, and employability. This meeting also enables the senior leadership team to identify challenges and opportunities.
- o The education provider invests in staffing and staff development and learning spaces. Academic staff are on permanent contracts. Workload of lecturers is monitored through workload planning this is part of the process to ensure there is the correct ratio of staff in place.
- o Data about enrolment, progression, completion and staff to student ratios (SSRs) is monitored at school, faculty and education provider level.
- o The education provider has close working relationships with employers. For example, they have contract reviews with employers and training days for employers' clinical education staff.
- o Internal validation involves the programme providing assurance around facilities and being able to deliver the programme. Skills laboratories on campus are less than four years old.
- o Minimum entry requirements are to be met in line with ESFA funding rules, there will also be an initial assessment and review at the start of the programme.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o Each programme has a programme director who has oversight of delivery. All programme directors are HCPC registrants who hold relevant teaching qualifications and have academic study at a level appropriate to their role.
  - o They are aided by a senior management team which comprises of a Head of Department and Head of School. Other co-ordinating roles are held by programme staff.
  - o Each school has senior leadership which ensures the quality and effectiveness of delivery of the programme. There are weekly programme director meetings to share good practice, identify areas of concern, and respond to internal and external quality process requirements.
  - o The education provider undertakes peer teaching observations. There is a community of practice scheme through the apprenticeship team to share best practice.
  - o Alignment of learning outcomes is checked through the quality process of internal validation.

- o The education provider undertakes monthly attendance monitoring. The benchmark set at 95% attendance, and learner's attendance is reported to their employer.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o The education provider is committed to a positive and supportive environment where staff, learners, and other stakeholders are valued and respected.
  - o Staff management is determined by institutionally set policies. Within the teams these policies are implemented to ensure full attention is given to staff development and support, including Continued Professional Development (CPD). All staff receive an annual performance development review, which sets development targets for the year ahead. Staff are required to have appropriate HCPC registration for leadership roles on a programme.
  - o Programme staff are encouraged to engage with Knowledge, Understanding, Development, Opportunities and Standing (KUDOS), the education provider's CPD scheme. This is accredited by Advance HE for the recognition of professional academic practice.
  - o The University Capability policy enables the education provider to monitor staff fitness to work, and to support them to ensure they are well positioned to contribute to their programme.
  - o All staff have managed workloads, using a workload model agreed at the education provider level. The workload model has tasks and targets implemented for the year ahead in consideration of learner numbers and work commitments.
  - o Lecturers receive 21 days of scholarly leave to develop their knowledge.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The education provider has strong links with regional partners. Key relationships involve working with practice education partners for practice education, and research and training. For example, they collaborate with Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.
  - o The education provider has an External Partnership team who maintain quality assurance of practice education through audits, evaluations. Each programme has a Placement Lead who works with the External Partnerships team to develop and maintain practice education. For ambulance practice education, the Placement Lead for the paramedic programme works directly with the Trust.

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality** –
  - o Programmes are subject to academic regulations and processes to ensure academic quality. Programmes are monitored via a continuous monitoring process with four touch points at key times during the academic cycle. The Heads of School have overall responsibility for this process. Each programme has an external examiner who is on the appropriate part of the HCPC register.
  - o All academic work is marked, moderated, and externally verified.
  - o The education provider has a peer observation scheme for lecturers to feedback. Learners can feed back through mechanisms such as early module and end of module evaluations, and an apprenticeship survey. Feedback is taken to Course Committee meetings for discussion if appropriate.
  - o Programme content is mapped against Ofsted apprenticeship knowledge, skills and behaviours.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments –
- o Practice education is managed using structured approval, monitoring, and reporting. Learner competence is considered at various stages of programmes and during practice education.
- o The Placement Handbook, policies, and procedures involve approval of each practice education site for quality and suitability of the learning experience. Approval criteria include appropriate supervision, line management, risk management policies, and expectations for both supervisors / educators and learners. Monitoring includes contracting, logbooks, progress and competency reports, and final evaluation. Processes are reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.
- o All new practice education providers are required to undergo approval. The requirement for length of experience of a practice educator varies according to the profession. Practice educators who can sign off competencies normally have a minimum of two years post-qualification. They also have a recognised supervision / mentoring / educator

qualification, or extensive experience in supervision equivalent to a formal certification. Learners are allocated a mentor who has undertaken mentor training with their employer.

- o Placement Leads ensure the education provider responds to any issues in practice. Placement Leads and Link Tutors work to ensure learners receive the level of exposure and support required to gain their competencies. They also work with practice educators to help manage learners who struggle to meet their outcomes.
- o Learners can raise concerns about the quality of the learning experience or their supervisor's expertise.
- o The education provider has a clinical practice team who support and guide learners. This includes an academic and administrative support.
- o The practice education partner for the programme is WMAS. The education provider will set their expectations with them through the Placement Provider Handbook and practice educator training days.
- o The above aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes. However, the proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship, which means learners will also be employees. Therefore, academic and employment processes and policies will apply. This is particularly the case regarding practice-based learning as the learner will likely be gaining experience in their working environment. We will therefore need to consider the role of the employer for the proposed programme relating to practice quality as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

- **Learner involvement** –
  - o The education provider's strategy is to ensure greater inclusivity and ensure equity of outcome. Consequently, the Inclusive Framework has been developed to inform how learners are involved as co-creators of the proposed programme.
  - o The learner voice is important for the education provider and there are a variety of ways learners can feedback regarding aspects of their programme and their experience at the education provider. These include learner representatives, programme committees, informal meetings with Programme Leads, and meetings with Heads of Department and the Head of School. Learners receive opportunities to feedback on modules at both mid- and endpoint of the module. Staff review the feedback and comment on their end of module summary form to include any actions taken. The education provider notifies the learner of actions taken as a result of their feedback.
  - o Learner representatives are invited to represent their cohorts at allied faculty programme committee meetings which are held twice a year. They provide feedback and input from a learner perspective.
  - o Programme teams review module and programme surveys on a regular basis. Data is gathered in various forms to inform and improve programmes. For example, NSS data and Graduate Outcomes survey.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.

- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o The education provider has a service users and carers team called SUCCESS, who contribute to admissions, teaching, and skill training such as scenarios and practical examinations.
  - o A representative from SUCCESS is invited to faculty programme meetings to provide a service user perspective.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The above aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes. However, the proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship, which means learners will also be employees. Therefore, academic and employment processes and policies will apply. This is particularly the case regarding practice-based learning as the learner will be gaining experience in their working environment. We will therefore need to consider the role of the employer for the proposed programme relating to practice quality as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

Learners

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
  - o Learners are supported across the education provider's programmes in a variety of ways. For example, by signposting to appropriate teams.
  - o Learners are supported through their studies through the mental health and wellbeing strategy (2022-2023). The virtual learning environment signposts learners to sources of support.
  - o For specific academic support learning and study support is provided by library services. For example, study skills guides for learning.
  - o Online career space for the learners to access and support their development of personal development.
  - o Learners have a personal academic tutor and, for first year learners on undergraduate programmes, an academic coach. The personal tutor gives pastoral and tutorial support. The academic coach helps learners to define their own learning plan and works with them to help them develop over their first year of study.
  - o Programmes have a "buddy" scheme, where more senior learners pair up with newer learner. Welfare is monitored and supported by personal tutors, programme tutors and practice educators.
  - o The education provider has a mental health and wellbeing support team. Signposting for mental health services is provided at the end of all taught sessions.

- o The education provider has extenuating circumstances processes which enable learners with unexpected ill health to defer assessment and continue their programme. Any request for extenuating circumstances for a practice education module must be granted in consultation with the Programme Lead to ensure the validity of the claim. If the learner is experiencing extenuating circumstances, then their assessments can be delayed extension be granted.
  - o Learners can access the mental health and wellbeing services at any of their practice education providers. Learners can take a leave of absence if appropriate.
  - o While in practice education learners have support from their employer and the education provider's wellbeing support. Learners have an allocated skills coach / personal tutor and mentor while in the workplace. There is also specific academic support, for example, learning and study support provided by library services.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability** –

  - o Tracking of a learner's progress is completed through academic boards. They are held at the end of each academic year.
  - o Learners are observed while on campus, and by their mentors and peers while in practice education. Issues are raised through their employer feedback / contact while in practice education. Learners undertake midway reviews.
  - o Learners studying professional programmes are expected to meet the standards of conduct performance and ethics set by the profession. Learner's fitness to practise is explored when their conduct, health or competence raises a serious or persistent cause for concern about their ability or suitability to continue programmes.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
  - o Interprofessional teaching takes place across subjects using staff from different professions, for example a mental health nurse and midwife on the paramedic team.
  - o The extended project module allows for exchange of ideas and experience between learners through group supervision.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - The education provider's strategic aims include principles of widening participation and inclusion. These are mirrored within the equality and diversity procedures operating across the education provider and their programmes. The inclusivity aims are embedded into the curriculum.
  - The Tutor Awareness Sheet (TAS) outlines the adjustments academic staff and service departments are required to make. This is based on the individual needs and assessment of learners with physical, psychological or sensory impairments. The TAS is made available to module leaders and other relevant staff members.
  - The above aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes. However, the proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship, which means learners will also be employees. Therefore, academic and employment processes and policies will apply. We will therefore need to consider the role of the employer for the proposed programme relating to equality, diversity and inclusion as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The above aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes. However, the proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship, which means learners will also be employees. Therefore, academic and employment processes and policies will apply. We will therefore need to consider the role of the employer for the proposed programme relating to equality, diversity and inclusion as part of stage 2 of the approval process.

Assessment

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** –
  - Summative assessments are moderated in line with academic regulations. This involves the use of an external examiner. The education provider uses blind marking wherever possible.
  - Marking rubrics are used for most modules and the education provider's generic guidelines may also be applied. The education provider gives learners these rubrics in advance so they can understand the marking criteria. There is both an internal moderation process and external moderation process which aid with objectivity and consistency.
  - The assessment handbook outlines the procedures for marking of all assignments, including anonymity in the marking process. The assessment policy applies to all summative assessments.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

- **Progression and achievement** –
  - o Each learner will complete four tripartite interviews each academic year. This is undertaken between a skills coach from the education provider, the employer and the learner. Part of this process will include reviewing their progress, what they have achieved and their next steps.
  - o At the end of each academic year there is:
    - an academic board that approves a learner's progression into the next year or programme completion, and
    - a degree board at the end of the programme to agree their award and whether they are to put forward as suitable for the HCPC register. To meet the apprentice requirements this includes a gateway board and an endpoint assessment.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals** –
  - o The academic appeals process is applied across the proposed programme. If a learner wishes to appeal, full details are sent by the programme teams with a recommendation to contact the Students Union for further advice. Learners can access the process through the education provider's website.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet 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:
- Staffing: the programme teams and senior staff are in place. For example, the senior lecturer and programme lead, and Head of Department. At times the education provider employs visiting lecturers. There is an academic lead for practice education and a faculty lead for apprenticeships. There are skills technicians to support the usage of skills labs.
- The education provider has facilities with specialist equipment in place. For example, two dedicated paramedic skills laboratories.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None.

Outstanding issues for follow up: There are two areas we will need to review through stage 2 of the process:

- The proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship, which means learners will also be employees. Therefore, academic and employment processes and policies will apply. This is particularly the case regarding practice-based learning as the learner will be gaining experience in their working environment. We will therefore need to consider the role of the employer for the proposed programme relating to practice quality as part of stage 2 (SETs 5.3 and 5.4) of the approval process.
- The proposed programme is a degree apprenticeship, which means learners will also be employees. Therefore, academic and employment processes and policies will apply. We will therefore need to consider the role of the employer for the proposed programme relating to equality, diversity and inclusion as part of stage 2 (SETs 2.7 and 3.14) of the approval process.

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) Paramedic Practice	FT (Full time)	Paramedic	100 learners, one cohort per year	05/05/2025

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 others (eg prof bodies, sector bodies that provided support) as follows:
- NHS England (Midlands) – we did not receive information which we considered would impact on this assessment.

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** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.
- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - Applicants need to have completed the Level 4 Diploma for Associate Ambulance Practitioners and the Level 3 Certificate in Emergency Response Ambulance Driving. They also need five GCSEs, including Maths, English and a Science at grade C+ / 4 or above or equivalent qualifications, and an A level qualification or an equivalent level 3 qualification.

- o They need to provide an Enhanced DBS and Occupational Health evidence. The education provider makes reasonable adjustments for any learner who has a disability recognised under the Equality Act 2010.
- o Learners may be admitted to the programme with accredited prior learning where they have previously successfully completed relevant study in higher education.
- o The education provider has an Equality and Diversity Unit who ensure learners and applicants are treated fairly and equally. The education provider has equality and diversity policies related to applicants in place and are implemented and monitored. These policies are aligned with the education provider's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. There are measures for reducing barriers and ensuring access to the proposed programme. Admissions staff receive training on unconscious bias and inclusive recruitment practices. The admissions process is reviewed annually for compliance with these policies.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - o Learners will undertake practice-based learning with their current employer, West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). Meetings between WMAS and the education provider occur regularly. Collaboration has taken place with WMAS to consider the content and structure of the programme. The employer is involved in tripartite reviews with the learner and education provider.
  - o Each learner has a named clinical team mentor and will regularly work with a mentor who has a mentorship qualification. Contract reviews ensure the capacity of practice-based learning.
  - o There are currently 5.5 full time equivalent (FTE) programme staff based at Telford campus. Due to the specialist nature of some of the taught content, 1.2 FTE lecturers based at Walsall campus are used. The education provider has approval to recruit a further 1.8 FTE staff and a Head of Paramedic Studies, and these will be advertised in January or February 2025.
  - o The education provider's approach to recruitment and development of staff aims to provide the best experience to learners. There is a mix of lecturers and senior lecturers, who have a range of experience. Members of staff are studying for postgraduate qualifications. All staff have either completed a PGCert in Academic Practice in Higher Education or are in the process of completing the programme.
  - o The Telford campus has four skills laboratories, two of these are for paramedic use. There is also equipment such as an anatomage table and a simulation suite. There are learning spaces, for example a lecture theatre and smaller classrooms. The education provider has a library on campus, and each learner has access to facilities and libraries across all campus sites. Each library has facilities such as

quiet spaces, and laptops available to hire. The education provider has mechanisms for support services. The virtual learning environment is 'Canvas' where learners and educators can access information such as module content.

- o Each ambulance hub has a training room with equipment. Learners on the proposed programme have access to the resources within WMAS's Ambulance Academy.
- o The education provider will relocate the programme to its City Campus in Wolverhampton from May 2026.
- o To monitor implementation of equality and diversity of learners, the education provider collects and analyses data on applicants, offers, and enrolments. These are broken down by protected characteristics. Regular audits identify patterns of under-representation. This informs activities to address barriers. Recent initiatives include engaging with under-represented communities and offering resources for applicants with additional needs. Stakeholders provide input into policy development and evaluation.
- o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
  - o The learning outcomes of the modules have been mapped to the HCPC standards of proficiency for paramedics.
  - o Teaching activities and assessment of professional behaviours are embedded throughout the programme. For example, module Professionalism, Ethics and Legal Aspects, learning outcome three is 'Demonstrate the ability to apply professional and legal principles to practice'. All practice-based learning modules include the competency of 'Demonstrate professional accountability for paramedic practice in accordance with HCPC standards'.
  - o The College of Paramedics' curriculum guidance has been used as a template to guide the programme content and structure.
  - o Each module has a designated module lead who is responsible to ensure the taught content is relevant and up to date. Each module is reviewed annually to ensure content is updated. Each module has several lecturers teaching on it to ensure the content is current.
  - o The programme structure uses a spiral curriculum which allows for the integration of theory and practice. Module specifications outline how teaching and learning activities and assessments are related to practice when appropriate. Some modules relate directly to paramedic practice. For example, Foundation in Paramedic Skills and Practices.
  - o Each module will incorporate a variety of teaching approaches. For example, lectures and self-directed study. An example of different methods of delivery across the curriculum is for patient assessment and management modules involve learners being taught skills in small groups in skills laboratories. Learners lead open skills sessions. Service users attend as patients to enhance simulation scenarios and provide lived experiences.

- o Reflection and autonomous decision-making are central to the programme. The learner is expected to take on more responsibility as they progress through the programme. Reflective practice and the link to professional behaviours is taught during the module Contemporary Paramedic, and learning outcome one 'Examine reflective practice and its application to continuous improvement for individuals and organisations'. Reflection is encouraged during and following simulated scenarios and as part of tripartite meetings. The skills coach review supports reflective practice as the learner is expected to reflect on how they are working towards meeting knowledge, skills and behaviours.
  - o The programme is designed to ensure evidence-based practice is developed throughout. Module assessment criteria reflect the need for learners to use up to date information. For example, in the module Foundation in Paramedic Skills and Practices, learning outcome one is 'Apply the theory that underpins the implementation of clinical skills pertinent to level four paramedic practice'. The programme has a specific module Research Methods and Study Skills, which develops the research and evidence-based practice skills of learners. Clinical Practice modules at levels four, five and six expect learners to be able to apply and demonstrate evidence-informed practice.
  - o Research and evidence-based practice is embedded throughout the curriculum. For example, in module Clinical Practice Level Six, learning outcome one is 'Critically analyse and apply key subject knowledge and understanding to inform paramedic clinical practice'.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
  - o Clinical practice modules are built into the curriculum across all academic levels. The structure of the programme allows learners to attend on campus and practice-based learning in blocks. As they progress through the programme learners are expected to develop from being a supported practitioner to an autonomous one. The programme content is planned to support the learner's development and the model of a spiral curriculum. For example, by teaching anatomy and physiology, learners are taught skills that link to those areas and then in practice-based learning apply the skills in practice.
  - o Programme content supports the learner's development as they progress through the programme. Clinical practice modules are built into the curriculum at levels four, five and six. Learners will be working full time during clinical practice blocks. Each academic year has 23 to 24 weeks of clinical practice. Allowing for leave, learners complete approximately 650 hours of clinical practice each year. Practice-based learning takes place in their place of employment. As part of tripartite meetings learners complete a skills scan of the apprenticeship knowledge, skills and behaviours. This helps the learner, the employer and the education provider identify areas which require development and to set milestones.

- o Quality monitoring of practice-based learning is achieved through a variety of ways. For example, the Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process (CMI). The programme has a designated Placement Lead and Placement Team. Learners can raise issues by completing a placement enquiry form   and sending it to the Placement Team. The education provider also reports issues to the employer. Learners can raise practice-based learning concerns during tripartite reviews.
  - o Issues in practice-based learning are addressed by the Paramedic Practice Clinical Practice Lead or Educational Review Meetings. Each ambulance hub has a Student Support Officer. Learners will be mentored by a qualified paramedic. The education provider has a Safeguarding Team who promote and implement the Safeguarding Policy, and ensure it is reviewed regularly. All education provider staff working with learners are trained in safeguarding and can access additional information, advice, support and training.
  - o All learners will always work with a qualified paramedic. Each learner will also have a named mentor. Mentors must be registered with the HCPC as a paramedic. Depending on their experience they will have completed and passed either a one day or a five-day mentorship course. Each mentor undertakes annual clinical updates. Each ambulance hub has a dedicated officer as a lead. Each ambulance hub has a designated training room and equipment. Each mentor has a CTM (Clinical team mentor) to support them in their role. WMAS has a training department which provides each mentor annual clinical updates. There is also senior support available if the hub training team require it.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area met.
- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o The assessments within the programme have been designed to ensure learners meet the SOPs on graduating from the programme. They also supports learners in developing further life, work and education skills. For example, IT and presentation skills.
  - o Modules have assessments for learning outcomes that relate to professional behaviours. For example, module Professionalism, Ethics and Legal Aspects, learning outcome two is 'Discuss key ethical principles and their application to professional practice'.
  - o The education provider moderates learner's submitted work. The education provider uses marking templates and performance descriptors when marking work. Academic regulations are applied, and the results are reviewed by an external examiner.
  - o The visitors considered the relevant standards within this SET area 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).

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.

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Relocation of programme

Summary of issue: The education provider informed us they will relocate the programme to its City Campus in Wolverhampton from May 2026. This move will potentially impact on the resources provided for the programme and learners. The education provider will need to reflect on the move and any impact as part of their next engagement with the performance review process in 2027 / 28.

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 programme is approved.

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitor's 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 Wolverhampton	CAS-01597-P9C8Z6	Paul Bates Wendy Smith	The 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: Staffing: the programme team and senior staff are in place. For example, the senior lecturer and programme lead, and Head of Department. At times the education provider employs visiting lecturers. There is an academic lead for practice education and a faculty lead for apprenticeships. There are skills technicians to support the usage of skills labs. The education provider has facilities with specialist equipment in place. For example, two dedicated paramedic skills laboratories.
Programmes				

Programme name	Mode of study	Nature of provision
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice	FT (Full time)	Apprenticeship

Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science	FT (Full time)	Biomedical scientist			01/09/2010
BSc (Hons) Podiatry	FT (Full time)	Chiropodist / podiatrist		POM - Administration; POM - sale / supply (CH)	01/09/2021
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Integrated Degree) Apprenticeship	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/04/2021
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2021
MSc Occupational Therapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Occupational therapist			12/09/2022
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2016
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science (Professional Pathway)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Paramedic			06/06/2022
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/2017
MSc Physiotherapy	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			12/09/2022
Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology (DcounsPsy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Counselling psychologist		01/01/2004
Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology (DcounsPsy)	PT (Part time)	Practitioner psychologist	Counselling psychologist		01/09/2014
Independent / Supplementary Non-Medical Prescribing (V300)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2020

Independent / Supplementary Non-Medical Prescribing (V300)	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2020
Independent / Supplementary Non-Medical Prescribing (V300) Level 7	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/09/2020