
Performance review process report

Sheffield Hallam University, 2018-2022

Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of Sheffield Hallam University. This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future, and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission to consider which themes needed to be explored through quality activities
- Undertaken quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The areas we explored focused on:
 - The introduction of new types of practice-based learning across the programmes. Through the quality activity, it became apparent the changes have not yet been implemented, though plans have evaluated well with learners. We will therefore assess how these were implemented and analysed through the next performance review.
 - The reconvening of the service user steering group which had been impacted by the pandemic. There was a plan to ensure it remained fit for purpose. This included the recruitment to a dedicated role to lead on patient and public involvement. Through the quality activity it became apparent that the review and recruitment had not yet happened. We will therefore assess how these were implemented and analysed through the next performance review.
 - The following are area of best practice was identified:
 - The visitors noted the significant investment in the Diagnostic radiography programme through the NHS England (as was Health Education England – HEE) Clinical Placements Expansion Programme bids to increase the amount and complexity of simulated placements that can be offered.
 - The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
 - To the next performance review – reflection on the rollout of new types of practice-based learning.
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- To the next performance review – reflection on the reconvened service user steering group and the recruitment of a dedicated person to lead patient and public involvement.
 - The provider should next engage with monitoring in 3 years, the 2025-26 academic year, because:
 - this will provide the education provider with sufficient time to introduce the key new initiatives around new practice-based learning and a reinvigoration of the service user strategy. This timeframe would allow the education provider time to be able to introduce, monitor, review and evaluated the proposed / recently introduced initiatives.
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Previous consideration This is the education provider's first interaction with the performance review process.

Decision The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide:

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

Next steps Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:

- Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2025-26 academic year
- Subject to the Panel's decision, we will [undertake further investigations as per section 5

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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 performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

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

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:

- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

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 a review of this education provider:

Jane Day	Lead visitor, Therapeutic Radiographer
John Crossfield	Lead visitor, Arts Therapist
Prisha Shah	Service User Expert Advisor
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer
Tracey Samuel-Smith	Education Manager

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. The performance review process does not always require profession level scrutiny which requires all professionals to be represented in the assessment panel. Rather, the process considers how the education provider has performed at institution level, linked to the themes defined in section 1. Lead visitors have the option to appoint additional advisory partners where this will benefit the assessment, and / or where they are not able to make judgements based on their own professional knowledge.

In this assessment, we considered we did not require professional expertise across all professional areas delivered by the education provider. We considered this because the lead visitors were satisfied they could assess performance and risk without needing to consider professional areas outside of their own.

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 23 HCPC-approved programmes across seven professions and including three Prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1994 when their Occupational Therapy provision first started. They are one of the largest HEIs in the UK and have had experience of delivering degree apprenticeship programmes since 2018.

Since the introduction of our current quality assurance model, the education provider has engaged with our approval process for the approval of their BSc (Hons) Dietetics (Degree Apprenticeship) and BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice (Degree Apprenticeship) programmes in February 2023. There are no issues referred from previous engagements.

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
Pre-registration	Art Therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2022
	Dietitian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2019
	Occupational therapy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2006
	Operating Department Practitioner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2015
	Paramedic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2017
	Physiotherapist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	1997

	Radiographer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2002
Post-registration	Independent Prescribing / Supplementary prescribing			2014

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.

Data The	Bench- mark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
Numbers of learners	985	1157	02/2023	<p>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 was presented by the education provider through this submission.</p> <p>The education provider is recruiting learners above the benchmark. We explored this through the assessment and are satisfied that the education provider continues to be adequately resourced for the total number of learners they have and that they remain sustainable.</p>
Learner non continuation	3%	1%	2020-2021	This Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.

				<p>The data point below 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 been maintained.</p>
Outcomes for those who complete programmes	94%	97%	2019-2020	<p>This HESA 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 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 1%.</p>
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	Silver		June 2017	<p>The definition of a Silver TEF award is: "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education."</p>
Learner satisfaction	74.5%	69.1%	2022	<p>This NSS data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 5%.</p> <p>We explored this through the assessment and portfolio submitted by the education provider. They had appropriately reflected upon</p>

				and developed action plans to address the NSS score at a profession specific level.
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Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the [thematic areas reviewed](#) section of this report.

The education provider’s self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. 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 was performing well against our standards.

Quality theme 1 – evaluation of changes to placements

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the introduction of new types of placements. For example, blended placements involving some direct clinical experience alongside remote consultations with service users, via online platforms. They noted the education provider stated new models of placements have evaluated well with learners and practice partners. The visitors requested to know if there was any data or reflection available to support the statement made by the education provider that “new models of placements have evaluated well with learners and practice partners”.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this through email clarification and additional evidence as we considered this the most appropriate and proportionate way to address the issue.

Outcomes of exploration: The visitors noted the range of placement changes which will be taken forward across the programmes. They also noted these changes would not be introduced until the academic year 2023-24. Then in 2024-25, these changes would be analysed to determine the benefits and if any further developments were required. The visitors recognised the planned changes were clear and responsive to consultation. They also recognised they were unable, at this stage, to consider reflection on how these changes had performed as part of the

programmes. They therefore require the education provider to reflect on the introduction of new placement opportunities as part of their next performance review.

Quality theme 2 – service users and carers engagement and timescales for action

Area for further exploration: We noted that prior to the pandemic, the Allied Health Professions (AHP) department had a robust service user strategy in place to meaningfully involve service users, carers, and partners in all aspects of the curricula throughout the learners' learning, teaching and assessment journey.

However, the education provider reflected on how the pandemic resulted in a reduction in opportunities for face-to-face engagement with service users because many were reluctant to undertake online sessions with learners. This meant the department were unable to provide results, or reflection upon, service user feedback during this timeframe due to the challenge of engaging service users. We noted the service user steering group has now reconvened, with the aim to revisit the key parts of the strategy, to ensure they remain fit for purpose and meet the needs of the service users and the learners. However, the portfolio did not explain how / when this would be done.

We were also made aware of a proposed dedicated role to lead on patient and public involvement and support the strategies outlined by the steering group but there were no timescales given to demonstrate how these actions will be achieved. The visitors explored this to gain a better understanding of ongoing / future activities which may be appropriate to explore through the next performance review activity.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this through email clarification as we considered this the most appropriate and proportionate way to address the issue.

Outcomes of exploration: In the response, the visitors noted the timeframes and associated activities to consider the ongoing role and purpose of service user engagement and the recruitment to a dedicated role. This was outlined under the heading of Transforming Lives Fellowships and while no hard deadline had been agreed, the indicated activities took place in the 2023-24 academic year. The visitors acknowledged there were planned activities in place and understood that timeframes could change. They were therefore satisfied about the plans going forward. They require the education provider to reflect on how these developments were taken forward and how the new process and position has performed as part of their next performance review.

Section 4: Summary of findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
 - The education provider noted they have held a strong financial position for several years and have sustained sufficient resources to invest in their ‘transforming lives’ strategy. This includes their estates and technology, staffing, research and innovation.
 - They have continued to hold sufficient cash balances and despite the impact from the COVID-19-19 pandemic. Their total income has experienced a growth and their operating surplus has remained positive. Their Wellbeing and Life Sciences (HWLS) college has invested in capacity to provide quality learner simulated placements to ensure numbers are sustainable and the overall practice learning hour requirements can be met.
 - The education provider is exploring expansion of their health programme provision including growth in international learners. Expansion would be across the areas of Nursing and Allied Health Professions due to high learner demand in these disciplines. To support this growth, the education provider has expanded the staff workforce in these areas.
 - The visitors considered the education provider’s reflection demonstrated they are adequately resourced and financially stable; therefore, they continue to be sustainable. The visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in this area.

- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - There is joint working between the education provider, placement providers and NHS England (formerly Health Education England), at operational and strategic levels, although this was impacted by staff shortages during the pandemic. For example, we noted some communications were impacted by staff shortages and competing priorities during the pandemic, affecting all stakeholders.
 - The education provider highlighted some challenges around partnerships. For example, the reconfigurations in NHS Trust and Private, Independent and Voluntary Organisations (PIVO) organisations. We understood not all organisations have been able to return to pre-pandemic capacity. However, the impact and response to COVID-19 has led to the development of new partnerships, and new learning opportunities. These involve face-to-face work and new technology, supporting blended approaches to practice-based learning. These reflect developments in contemporary service delivery in the health and social care sectors.
 - The education provider noted how the HCPC approved MA Art Psychotherapy (pre-registration) programme at Leeds Beckett University had transferred to them. This programme had been delivered alongside Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust (SHSC). They discussed the challenges they faced because of this transfer. Due to the growth in learner numbers, SHSC had no longer been able to accommodate the programme. This resulted in an 18-month period of overlap between January 2022 and July 2023 while

both programmes were running simultaneously. The education provider reflected upon how the staff have worked, and continue to work, across both provisions. Particularly in respect of academic planning, teaching and assessment from Sept 21 – July 2023 to ensure successful delivery of the programmes.

- The visitors were satisfied the education provider has continued to develop strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders, and this has led to improvements across their provision, particularly around practice-based learning. As a result, we are assured about the education provider's performance in this area.

- **Academic and placement quality –**

- The education provider described how their Academic Quality Framework helped in safeguarding academic standards and improving the quality of learner experience. Audits are completed every two years and learners in practice-based learning are supported through the education provider's Reporting concerns process.
- Due to the ongoing challenges regarding the number of available 'traditional' clinical placements, the education provider introduced new types of placements. For example, blended placements involving some direct clinical experience alongside remote consultations with service users, via online platforms. The education provider explained how these placements helped to examine potential placement learning opportunities linked to their four pillars of practice and standards of proficiencies. It has also meant involvement of some of their leaders in advanced research to provide additional placement learning capacity.
- Through [Quality Activity 1](#), the education provider clarified the timeframes around the introduction of the new placements. These will be introduced from the next academic year and analysed in 2024-25 academic year. As such, reflection on these will be considered through the next performance review.
- As such, the visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in this area.

- **Interprofessional education –**

- The visitors noted the education provider has a strong Integrated Care Curriculum (ICC) embedded throughout all levels of the curricula. Learners from undergraduate, pre-registration, and post graduate Health and Social Care programmes come together to learn with, from and about each other. They explore key integrated care curricular themes which were shared across all programmes.
- Challenges of this were noted in the education provider's reflections and the changes they were going to make to the future delivery of ICC were discussed. For example, they noted the challenge of planning to map teaching and placement concurrencies across all programmes given the varied training plan and availability of space to support on campus facilitation of IPE for such large number of learners. To address this, the education provider has now built on feedback from learners, worked with programme teams, IPE facilitation teams and module leads. Major changes have been made to timing and mode of

IPE delivery for 2023/24 academic year. Where any cross overs exist, the education provider noted they have started working with programme teams to develop a more bespoke and proactive approach to supporting all learners impacted by the cross overs.

- The visitors were clear that interprofessional education continues to take place for the benefit of the service user and that, where challenges occurred in IPE, the education provider had strategies in place to manage them.
 - The visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in this area.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - We noted the education provider uses the Hallam Model alongside their principles of pedagogical design of programmes to ensure that service user involvement is evident throughout the curriculum. We understood this is linked to the Integrated Care Curriculum which was designed using co-production including the service users and carers.
 - The education provider noted service users are at the centre of what they do. The education provider works with service users to develop teaching materials. This helps to provide real life scenarios which they considered instrumental in delivery of sessions and providing evaluation of learners' performance and the programmes.
 - Through [Quality Activity 2](#), the education provider clarified the timeframes and actions to ensure service user engagement is fit for purpose, including the recruitment to a dedication role. As these would be taken forward from the next academic year, reflection on this will be considered through the next performance review.
 - As such, the visitors were satisfied the education provider is performing well in this area.
 - **Equality and diversity –**
 - The education provider has several strategies and policies in place that help to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all programmes. For example, the University admissions policy demonstrates the education provider is committed to equality of opportunity for all learners. The policy helps to ensure no potential learner is excluded from entry to any of their programmes as a result of discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief etc.
 - The education provider highlighted some of the EDI related challenges their department faced during the review period. For example, they identified the degree awarding gap relating to Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) learners. They also noted a lack of consistency in the statistics across several of their programme with a high proportion of their learners coming from BAME backgrounds. We understood this group of learners may have experienced issues common to the group, such as lack of belonging or additional needs.
 - We were reassured the education provider has identified these issues and have taken appropriate approaches to address them. Leadership teams have participated in the Equity Accomplice programme with a

suite of sessions to support development of racial literacy and anti-racist practice. The education provider noted this will be opened out to the rest of the department.

- The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area because they have adequately reflected upon how they continue to monitor EDI and manage potential risks. Thus, ensuring they are providing all learners an impartial, fair and supportive environment to allow them to learn.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The information provided demonstrated details of how the academic portfolio is going to be reviewed this academic year (2022-23), with revalidation events for AHP programmes taking place in November 2023 with delivery commencing in September 2024. All undergraduate provision is being revisited.
 - Blended learning is progressing, simulated placements are being developed following funding from Health Education England (HEE). We noted that in line with key government agendas and strategic workforce planning, apprenticeship programmes are also being developed. We understood a new 12-bed ward will support these developments.
 - We understood how the impact of COVID-19 has led to the re-assessment of an existing strategy – Transforming Lives strategy. We noted the education provider has now developed the Future Strategy Programme (FSP) which they indicated would support the delivery of their priorities set out in Transforming Lives. The FSP seeks to realise the following goals:
 - a strongly performing portfolio;
 - a financially sustainable estate and operating model; and
 - an engaged and motivated university community.
 - The visitors were reassured about the education's performance in this area. This was because the education provider demonstrated they have been able to identify long term challenges and opportunities and are taking active steps towards developing those opportunities.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
 - Details were provided for all programmes about progress made to date and provision made for existing learners. The information provided demonstrated that many of the SOPs are already integrated throughout programmes. For example, we noted SOPs – Promoting public health and preventing ill-health is integrated in the interprofessional learning modules at level 4, 5, 6 and 7, and will continue to remain core to the delivery in the future. Similarly, SOPs around EDI and further centralising of the service user are also embedded across the levels.

- The education provider is looking to embed “Grow +” which is a research-based initiative, developed by their psychologists to help learners develop a better understanding of themselves and their strengths with a view to further developing coping strategies for resilience. This is being embedded into their Personal and Professional Development module from next year’s delivery to ensure learners meet revised SOP - Registrants mental health.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider’s performance in this area. They noted clear alignment with the revised SOPs / plans in place to ensure the revised SOPs are integrated throughout the programmes.
- **Impact of COVID-19-19 –**
 - The education provider’s portfolio provided a full discussion of the impact of the pandemic on both academic and placements components of the provision. Learning taken from the pandemic included:
 - a return to a hybrid delivery model which harnesses the positive aspects of synchronous and asynchronous online delivery but also recognises where a stronger pedagogical approach aligns with on campus teaching;
 - new practice-based learning opportunities with the NHS Trust and Private providers; and
 - reviewing of assessments has provided the opportunity to consider the learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Some of the changes have been implemented fully, for example moving to online exams.
 - The reflection demonstrated the education provider has considered the impact the pandemic has had on their provision. They have identified and taken forward learning from this to improve their provision. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied with the education provider’s performance in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - We understood the start of COVID-19-19 meant the education provider had to pivot to online delivery rapidly. The education provider noted that they have had a technology enhanced learning strategy in place prior to the pandemic. Their AHP department had vast experience in delivering MSc programmes via distance learning. As such, this was swiftly applied to their undergraduate provision to ensure learners could continue with their studies.
 - The education provider described some of the challenges they experienced during this period. For example, the challenge of making online learning more engaging, social and active. However, through fusing technology, they were able to deliver a comparable experience to the established face-to-face working with their stakeholders. They outlined how they will continue to build on and enhance their current delivery models.
 - The visitors considered the education provider has performed well in this area because there is clear evidence of an existing use of

technology to support their provision, as well as developments triggered out of the new ways of working due to the pandemic.

- Continuous review of their provision to ensure technology is explored and considered for the enhancement of learning to support teaching, learning and assessment also corroborates the visitors' view.
- **Apprenticeships –**
 - The education provider submitted a detailed discussion regarding their apprenticeship provision. This included the successes and the challenges that both the department and learners have encountered. For example, they noted how issues around clearance and occupational health checks caused delays for some of their Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy apprentices going on placement. The education provider has now developed closer relationships with employers to ensure more collaborative working.
 - From March 2023, the placement clearance process changed to increase employer responsibility for managing professional requirements prior to enrolment on the programmes. This helped in preventing any clearance issues delaying placement allocation, whilst also ensuring that all apprentices are suitably prepared for placement.
 - In addition, we understood an apprenticeship portfolio lead will be employed to work across their AHP provision. This will ensure consistency and quality assurance measures are in place.
 - The education provider also described some of their successes in terms of employability rates and satisfaction with the apprenticeship programmes which followed a full Ofsted inspection into their apprenticeship provision in February 2022.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance around apprenticeships considering the successes they have achieved in developing and running a number of degree apprenticeship programmes and how they have managed challenges over the review period.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
 - The education provider noted that while their last assessment took place in 2010, they continued to build the Quality Code into their validation and revalidation activities.
 - This gave them a level of confidence about their present and likely future management of the academic standards of their programmes.
 - The visitors did not have any concerns about the education provider's performance in this area and therefore considered it satisfactory.
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies –**

- The visitors noted the education provider has a robust alert system in place to ensure they receive Care Quality Commission (CQC) / Office for Standards in education (OFSTED) publications relating to a health / social care placement provider organisation. The education provider outlined the processes they followed if they received a CQC / OFSTED report with 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' rating.
 - In 2022, CQC completed an inspection for the Sheffield Teaching Hospital NHS Trusts. Following this, an ongoing action plan was put in place to ensure quality assurance of placements are maintained. In addition, the education provider's Director of placements has continued to provide HEE with monthly updates to monitor progress.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area as they have adequately reflected on how they have responded to and managed an incident following inspection of their practice providers by external bodies.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes –**
 - The education provider submitted a breakdown of NSS outcomes. As outlined earlier in the report, the data from 2022 showed a result of 69.1% against benchmark of 74.5%. Compared to 2021, this result had dropped by five percent.
 - The education provider noted this decline in results and attributed much of the effect to the pandemic. This included the necessary changes to delivery / assessment which rapidly needed to be introduced and continued due to social distancing.
 - For each of the programmes, the education provider had reflected upon profession specific activities to address the decline in the NSS score.
 - From the reflection submission, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.
- **Office for Students monitoring –**
 - The education provider noted the processes they have in place to monitor and develop institutional compliance. We understood they have maintained a regular review of the overarching framework of the Conditions of Registration through an internal Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration Monitoring Group. The Group reports and escalates issues through the University Executive Board and to the Governance & Nominations Committee of the Board of Governors.
 - We recognise the education provider is above the regulator threshold and sector benchmarks and are not subject to any additional monitoring in respect of the revised OfS Conditions of Registration.
 - The visitors were assured about the education provider's performance in this area. The visitors considered the education provider's reflection demonstrated outcomes from OfS monitoring have remained positive and continue to support the education provider's position.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - We noted that each programme within the allied health professions arena works closely with their respective professional body. There are

departmental Quality Boards that maintain oversight of relationships and engagement with professional bodies.

- The visitors were satisfied the education provider's reflection provided sufficient detail to demonstrate they continue to actively engage with other professional bodies and that actions from review activities were being taken.
- Therefore, the visitors considered the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - A detailed self-reflection on challenges, developments and successes was submitted for all programmes. Across all programmes, HCPC SOPs have been mapped or were already in place.
 - As part of their developments, we understood the Operating Department Practice team developed and implemented Peer Enhanced E-Placement (PEEP), an innovative compliment to traditional placement learning experiences. The education provider described this as a resource that offers a blended placement encompassing service user involvement, re-usable placement resources and lesson plans.
 - For their Prescribing programmes V300 (Non-Medical Prescribing) programme, we understood all the learning and teaching materials have been reviewed. The education provider noted how they have embedded the up-dated Royal Pharmaceutical Society Competence Framework for all Prescribers (2022) and how it is now in all their teaching materials. The Framework is also embedded in the Practice Assessment Document that all learners need to complete before qualifying.
 - The education provider's detailed reflection covered the different areas of curriculum development for all their provision. This demonstrated to the visitors the education provider is committed to a continued development of all their programmes.
 - This assures us the education provider is ensuring that learners completing their programmes will be able to meet our standards of professional knowledge and skills and are fit to practise.
 - Therefore, the visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - The education provider submitted a detailed self-reflection on challenges, developments, and successes they have experienced in response to changes in professional body guidance across all their programmes.

- For example, they noted the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) Learning and Development Standards were revised in 2019 and the Portfolio of their Occupational therapy programmes were mapped to these. Areas from the new standards were already embedded in the portfolio of the programme curricula. With the recognition of the Degree Apprenticeship (DA) pathway as a new route to a professional qualification as an occupational therapist, the education provider has also developed degree apprenticeship programme which is recognised and aligns with the Learning and Development Standards (RCOT 2019).
 - In addition, the education provider noted they now have a Grade 9 Professional Lead in place and programme leads for each of their BSc, degree apprenticeship and MSc programmes. They stated that all appointments are registered occupational therapists and are educated to MSc level or above.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area as their reflection demonstrated they have continued to develop their programmes in a way that reflects changes in professional body guidance.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning –**
 - As part of their reflection, the education provider described how COVID-19-19 has had a great impact on many of their programmes. In response to the lack of availability of practice-based learning due to the impact of workforce reduction, sickness and competition from other providers, a number of actions were put in place.
 - In Diagnostic Radiography, the education provider invested through HEE Clinical Placements Expansion Programme bids to increase the amount and complexity of simulated placements that can be offered.
 - In Occupational Therapy, clear processes and timescales were developed, with the Professional Placements Team. This in turn resulted in streamlined processes, earlier management of placements, and full use of placement capacity, resulting in placement notification six weeks in advance.
 - The Arts Therapy placement team have increased from one to two coordinators to support the growing demands of practice-based learning. We understood the coordinators have expanded the geographical areas available to learners each year, (such as the North-West). In addition, recent partnerships have been discussed and developed with new providers in this region.
 - The visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area as their reflection demonstrated an effective management of the capacity of practice-based learning. It is also clear how the education provider has used different innovations to expand practice-based learning capacity, some of which were in response to the impact of COVID-19-19.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: The visitors noted the significant investment in the Diagnostic radiography programme through the NHS England (as was Health Education England – HEE) Clinical Placements Expansion Programme bids to increase the amount and complexity of simulated placements that can be offered. Purchase of new pieces of hardware included new dental x-ray equipment, a new C-Arm, as well as a mobile unit.

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

• **Learners –**

- The education provider described how learners are involved in programme design, delivery and management. We understood learners are involved in the development of programmes through workshops to generate discussion and ideas about programme design and then at a later point to feedback about that design. They also contribute to the review, evaluation and continuous improvement of assessment. At departmental level, the student representatives are invited to participate on the Departmental Leadership Team meeting during review the Course improvement plans.
- As outlined elsewhere in this report, the education provider reflected on the decline in the NSS score.
- In addition, the visitors noted the detailed and profession specific reflection from the education provider. For example, for Paramedics, they noted how feedback and communications were identify as areas for improvement in the NSS and module evaluations. In response, they have introduced a weekly electronic newsletter. While the introduction of the newsletter was positive received, they have agreed to send this bi-weekly.
- The visitors are satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.

• **Practice placement educators –**

- The education provider's reflection for each programme demonstrated the successes, developments and challenges that the pandemic posed on timely feedback between the teams and practice partners.
- We noted a clear strategy was put in place throughout the pandemic. Examples were provided of engagements with placement providers through the fully simulated placements which are now moving back to face-to-face practice placement.
- For their Dietetics programme, the education provider noted how the development of the MSc programme created challenges for local managers and practice educators providing placements to two education providers on a shared placement circuit. To address this, the Dietetic Practice Learning Partnership (DPLP) was established to support joint working between the education providers and practice educators with oversight of strategic and operational issues in respect of placement learning. Joint working has since informed placement planning with the programme utilising available capacity in the north of

the circuit, that was not used by the other provider, so avoiding overloads.

- For the Radiotherapy and Oncology programme, the education provider described how their strong working relationship with clinical partners had helped address the challenges relating to capacity. This was in addition to their model of having a consistent named member of the academic team working with an individual radiotherapy department practice educator. This working relationship, together with the model, have helped to ensure consistent communication throughout the pandemic. We understood this had continued as the education provider supported learners back into their clinical placements and as they moved into the post pandemic phase.
 - The education provider's reflection sufficiently demonstrated to the visitors they have been able to use feedback from practice educators and taken appropriate actions, particularly in regard to ensuring practice-based learning capacity. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **External examiners –**
 - The education provider's portfolio reflected upon how their External Examiner (EE) processes contributed to the maintenance of threshold academic standards through the annual appointment of, engagement with, and responding to EE.
 - The visitors also noted the detailed and profession specific reflection from the education provider. For example, for Diagnostic radiography programme, the pandemic required changes to the assessment of modules. The relevant EE was consulted to ensure parity and validity across the revisions. They recognised how supportive their EE had been in a trying and busy period to ensure appropriate assessments.
 - Therefore, the visitors are satisfied the education provider has performed well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Non-continuation rates:**
 - The non-continuation data collected via the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) showed the education provider rated 1% compared to a 3% benchmark. This demonstrated the education provider was performing above sector norms.
 - The education provider described how they were able to give focused wraparound support to learners to ensure they continued to engage with their learning during the pandemic.
 - Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the education provider recorded a low number of learners leaving their studies before

achieving their target award. The education provider is seeking to maintain this high level of performance going forward.

- The visitors were satisfied with how the education provider supported learners, particularly during the pandemic, and how this has led to a low non-continuation rate. Therefore, the visitors considered the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Graduate outcomes:**
 - Similarly, to above the HESA data for graduate outcomes shows 96% of graduated learners are either in employment or further study compared to a benchmark of 93%. This demonstrated the education provider was performing above sector norms.
 - We understood the education provider introduced a Highly Skilled Employment strategic project which was aimed at embedding employability into all programmes they offer. They reflected on how this helped them to exceed the Office for Students threshold for progression to highly skilled employment / further study.
 - The visitors were assured that learners who successfully complete their programmes at this education provider make significant progress after their studies. Therefore, the visitors considered the education provider has performed well in this area.
- **Teaching quality:**
 - The education provider reflected on how the Teaching Excellent Framework award recognised they had performed to, or above, the benchmark on all eight indicators.
 - Strengths and weaknesses were identified. For example, the education provider had identified and taken forward reflection on how learner outcomes across all levels, particularly around continuation / completion, was found to be excellent. However lower satisfaction for older learners was identified as a weak area.
 - The visitors considered the education provider has performed satisfactorily in this area.
- **Learner satisfaction:**
 - The NSS data point suggests there has been a dip of five percent in their 2022 scores compared to the previous year.
 - The education provider noted this decline in results and attributed much of the effect to the pandemic. This included the necessary changes to delivery / assessment which rapidly needed to be introduced and continued due to social distancing.
 - For each of the programmes, the education provider had reflected upon profession specific activities to address the decline in the NSS score. Through clarification, the visitors learnt how learner feedback would be collected and analysed from the 2024-25 academic year.
 - From the reflection submission, the visitors were satisfied with the education provider's performance in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

The following areas were referred to the next performance review process:

- As outlined in [Quality Activity 1](#), reflection on the rollout of new types of practice-based learning.
- As outlined in [Quality Activity 2](#), reflection on the reconvened service user steering group and the recruitment of a dedication person to lead patient and public involvement.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year

Reason for next engagement recommendation

- Internal stakeholder engagement
 - The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider were learners, practice education providers and educators, external examiners, local NHS Trust and NHS England.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
 - The education provider engaged with all the relevant professional bodies for their HCPC approved programmes. They considered professional body findings in improving their provision
 - The education provider engaged with the Office for Students, the Care Quality Commission and Office for Standards in Education. They considered the findings of named regulator in improving their provision
 - The education provider considers sector and professional development in a structured way
- Data supply
 - Data for the education provider is available through key external sources. Regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period
- What the data is telling us:
 - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.
- The education provider noted new types of practice-based learning and a review of the service user steering group which will impact on their provision

from the 2023-24 academic year. We will need to review the impact of this when the provider can reflect on implementation, which will be in the 2025-26 academic year.

- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a 3-year monitoring period is to provide the education provider with sufficient time to introduce the key new initiatives around new practice-based learning and a reinvigoration of the service user strategy. As outlined earlier in the report, these have been referred to the next performance review. This timeframe would allow the education provider time to be able to introduce, monitor, review and evaluated the proposed / recently introduced initiatives.

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 education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out as outlined in [section 5](#).

Reason for this decision: The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period, for the reasons noted through the report.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography	FT (Full time)	Radiographer		Diagnostic radiographer	01/09/2002
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Radiographer		Diagnostic radiographer	01/01/2021
BSc (Hons) Dietetics (Degree Apprenticeship)	DL (Distance learning)	Dietitian			01/03/2023
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/1994
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Occupational therapist			01/08/2018
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice	FT (Full time)	Operating department practitioner			01/09/2015
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Operating department practitioner			01/03/2023
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science	FT (Full time)	Paramedic			01/09/2017
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	FT (Full time)	Physiotherapist			01/09/1997
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Physiotherapist			01/03/2019
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology	FT (Full time)	Radiographer		Therapeutic radiographer	01/09/2002
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography (Degree Apprenticeship)	DL (Distance learning)	Radiographer		Therapeutic radiographer	21/03/2022
MA Art Psychotherapy Practice	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Art therapy		01/01/2022
MA Art Psychotherapy Practice	PT (Part time)	Arts therapist	Art therapy		01/01/2022
MSc Dietetics	FT (Full time)	Dietitian			01/01/2019
MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)	FT (Full time)	Occupational therapist			01/09/2006

MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)	FTA (Full time accelerated)	Physiotherapist			01/01/2017
MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology in Practice	FT (Full time)	Radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer		01/01/2018
Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing; Independent prescribing	01/01/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing	PT (Part time)			Supplementary prescribing	01/01/2014
Non-Medical Prescribing	DL (Distance learning)			Supplementary prescribing	01/09/2020