

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Programme name	IHCD Paramedic Award
Validating body/awarding body	Institute of Health Care Development (IHCD)
Mode of delivery	Full Time and Part Time
Relevant part of HPC register	Paramedic
Date of visit	10 and 11 July 2008

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 13 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Paramedic' must be registered with us. The HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. The education provider has until 10 September 2008 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee on 25 September 2008. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 5 January 2009. The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Education and Training Committee on the ongoing approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Education and Training Committee on 25 March 2009.

Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was an approved programme which had not been approved since the publication of the QAA subject benchmark statements. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The professional body and the HPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Mr Bob Fellows (Paramedic) Mr Gordon Pollard (Paramedic) Mr Derek Adrian-Harris (Radiographer)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Miss Katherine Lock
HPC observer	Mrs Tracey Samuel-Smith
Proposed student numbers	90
Initial approval	September 2000
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	25 April 2009
Chair	Ms Barbara Baker
Secretary	Ms Sue Taylor
Members of the joint panel	Mr John Martin (The College of Paramedics)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider.

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
External verifier report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust Policy Documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review a programme specification or external examiners' reports prior to the visit as these documents do not exist.

During the visit the HPC saw the following groups or facilities;

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators/mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (e.g. specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 51 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 12 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors agreed that the education provider may wish to discuss some of these conditions with the validating/awarding body before attempting to respond to the conditions.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme. Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

2.2.1 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of written and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that the admissions procedures include evidence of a good command of written and spoken English.

Reason: The education provider explained that ambulance technicians can only enter the ambulance service having obtained English GCSE with a C or equivalent. However, whilst the programme was mainly for technicians the visitors saw evidence that on occasion it was open to external recruits. To be eligible to apply for registration as a paramedic, programmes must ensure graduates can communicate in English to the standards equivalent to level 7 of the international English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5. In order to assess whether students, upon graduation, are able to meet this standard of proficiency regarding English Language requirements the selection and entry criteria must include the assessment of this for all applicants.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence as to where the following standards of proficiency (SOPs) are taught in the programme and then assessed:

- 1a.4 understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent
- 1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
 - be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem
 - be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
 - know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
 - recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions
 - be able to use a range of integrated skills and self-awareness to manage clinical challenges effectively in unfamiliar circumstances or situations
- 1a.8 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise
 - understand the need to practice safely and effectively within their scope of practice
 - understand the need to maintain high standards of personal conduct
 - understand the importance of maintaining their own health
 - understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career long learning

- be able to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness by adopting strategies for physical and psychological self-care, critical self-awareness, and by being able to maintain a safe working environment
- 1b.3 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers
- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the international English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
 - understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability.
 - be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non verbal communication with service users and others
 - be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
 - understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
 - understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible
 - recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility
 - be able to identify anxiety and stress in patients, carers and others and recognise the potential impact upon communication
- 1b.4 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user
- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users
- 2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information
- 2a.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques
- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment
 - be able to conduct a thorough and detailed physical examination of the patient using observations, palpation, auscultation and other assessment skills to inform clinical reasoning and to guide the formulation of a diagnosis across all age ranges, including calling for specialist help where available
 - be able to use observation to gather information about the functional abilities of patients
 - understand the need to consider the assessment of both the health and social care needs of patients and carers.
- 2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate

- 2a.4 be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected
- 2b.1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to determine appropriate actions
- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice
 - be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
 - be aware of a range of research methodologies
 - be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
 - be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
- 2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales
- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors
 - understand the need to demonstrate sensitivity to the factors which shape lifestyle that may impact on the individual's health and affect the interaction between the patient and paramedic
- 2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully
- understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
 - ensure patients are positioned (and if necessary immobilised) for safe and effective interventions
 - know the indications and contra-indications of using specific paramedic techniques, including their modifications
 - be able to modify and adapt practice to emergency situations
- 2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately
- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
 - understand the need to use only accepted terminology in making records
- 2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly
- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care
 - be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user
 - recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes

- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- 2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice
- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
 - be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
 - be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
 - participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
 - understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
 - recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review
- 3a.1 know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice
- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
 - understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention
 - understand the following aspects of biological science:
 - how the application of paramedic practice may cause physiological and behavioural change
 - human growth and development across the lifespan
 - the main sequential stages of normal development, including cognitive, emotional and social measures of maturation through the human lifespan
 - relevant physiological parameters and how to interpret changes from the norm
 - the factors influencing individual variations in human function
 - understand the following aspects of behavioural science:
 - psychological and social factors that influence an individual in health and illness
 - how psychology and sociology can inform an understanding of physical and mental health, illness and health care in the context of paramedic practice and the incorporation of this knowledge into paramedic practice
 - how aspects of psychology and sociology are fundamental to the role of the paramedic in developing and maintaining effective relationships
 - understand the following aspects of clinical science:
 - pathological changes and related clinical features of conditions commonly encountered by paramedics
 - the changes that result from paramedic practice, including physiological, pharmacological, behavioural and functional
 - the theoretical basis of assessment and treatment and the scientific evaluation of effectiveness
 - principles of evaluation and research methodologies which enable the integration of theoretical perspectives and research evidence into the design and implementation of effective paramedic practice

- the theories supporting problem solving and clinical reasoning

Reason: Many of the standards of proficiency were mapped and explained in the programme team meeting to be met in 'module J'. The programme team have, however, designed this short module for post registration. Therefore, students will not have met these standards of proficiency until after they have graduated. Some of the SOPs were explained to be covered at technician level but there was no assessment of this achievement at paramedic level within this taught programme. With this in mind and with the documentation presented, the visitors were unsure that students were meeting the above standards of proficiency.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to show where the philosophy and values of the curriculum guidance are implemented and assessed in the programme.

Reason: It was not clear from the documentation and discussions with the programme team where issues of law, ethics and research were taught within the programme. With this knowledge, students will broaden their depth of learning, giving them a good underpinning for the rest of the learning outcomes within the programme. Standards of proficiency that relate to the philosophy and values in the curriculum guidance have not been covered. These are detailed in the condition against SET 4.1 and in meeting this condition students will, in turn, graduate with the ability to meet these standards of proficiency.

4.5 The delivery of the programme must assist autonomous and reflective thinking and evidence based practice.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that the programme teaches and assesses autonomous thinking.

Reason: Through various questioning with the programme team it was evident that a great deal of the focus on autonomous thinking was potentially carried out in the post registration 'J module'. The description of the way in which this teaching was carried out was sufficient to meet this standard. However, this module is taught once the students are registered and therefore they will not have been assessed on their autonomy. Standards of proficiency that relate to autonomous and reflective thinking were not included in the learning outcomes for the programme. These are detailed in the condition against SET 4.1. In meeting this condition students will, in turn, graduate with the ability to meet these standards of proficiency.

5.2 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement

Condition: The education provider is to provide evidence that an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff are available for students at all of the placements.

Reason: The programme team explained that they are still looking to recruit practice placement educators (PPE) and students told the visitors they did not always have a named PPE in the clinical setting, often spending there their time chasing the opportunity to pass endotracheal tubes by running from one theatre to another. The visitors were unsure if the amount of staff available at placements was enough for the expanding student numbers enrolling on to this programme. The programme team explained they share the placement educator's database with an approved university paramedic programme but this was not included in the documentation. In order to meet this standard, visitors want to see formal processes of ensuring placement educators are appropriately qualified and experienced and that there is a formal process in place to ensure the needed amount of practice placement educators are available.

5.6 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of a formal process in place to approve and monitor all placements.

Reason: Throughout discussions with the placement providers, students and programme team it became evident that student placements were not approved. The programme team explained that a university uses the ambulance centre as a placement for their programme and audits the ambulance centre; this is not relevant to this programme. There were no processes to audit, process placement co-ordinators feedback or deal with complaints/difficult situations. The placement providers told the visitors that they were not fed back to once students had completed feedback exercises and therefore could not act upon any issues.

5.7.1 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved.

Condition: The education provider must provide a list of learning outcomes to be achieved at placements which will be designed for student and placement providers' information.

Reason: The learning outcomes to be achieved during placements were not categorically listed in the documentation available to students and placement educators. When meeting the placement providers, they explained to the visitors that they would like to have this information. Providing this information will make what is expected of the student explicit and easier to measure and assist in measuring of progression and the outcomes of competency.

5.7.3 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the expectations of professional conduct.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that the students are informed about the expectations of professional conduct before attending placements.

Reason: The students were taught the areas of professional conduct. However, the documentation showed that this is taught on the last week of the programme once they have completed placements. In meeting with the placement providers, they explained that minor issues had arisen around student conduct whilst on placement. A change in the structure and delivery of the timetabling will better prepare students for their understanding and expectation of professional conduct in placements.

5.8.1 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators must have relevant qualifications and experience.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that all staff supporting students in practical placements have relevant qualifications and experience.

Reason: It was explained by the education provider throughout various meetings at the visit that there was support for students whilst on placement but a formal process was not in place to select these supporters. The education provider explained they share the practice placement educator's database with an approved university paramedic programme but this was not included in the documentation. In order to meet this standard, visitors want to see a formal process of ensuring placement educators have the relevant experience and knowledge and that this is a consistent process across all placements used within the trust.

5.8.2 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators must be appropriately registered.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that all staff supporting students in practical placements are appropriately registered.

Reason: It was explained throughout various meetings at the visit that there was support for students whilst on placement but a formal process was not in place to select these practice placement educators. The programme team explained they share the placement educator's database with an approved university paramedic programme but this was not included in the documentation. In order to meet this standard, visitors want to see formal processes of ensuring placement educators are appropriately registered. The placement educators may include health professionals who are not HPC registered, but are registered with other statutory regulators, for example a Nurse educator with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. In this case the education provider will need to explain how their qualifications and training assist students to learn.

5.8.3 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The education provider must provide a strategy and timescales for practice placement educators to enrol onto and complete the designed Mentor Preceptorship programme that will fully prepare them to carry out practice placement educator roles

Reason: The programme team provided information on a Mentor Preceptorship model currently going through their education committee for approval. The visitors were impressed with this concept model and would like to see the plan and timescale for implementing this tool in order to be assured that future mentors are undertaking appropriate training.

6.7.5 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that the assessment regulations specify the requirement for the appointment of an external examiner from the relevant part of the register or otherwise appropriately registered.

Reason: From the documentation and discussion with the programme team it was apparent that there was no external examiner for the programme. The visitors recognise that the validating/awarding body visit the education provider to assess the programme against their rules and regulations. However, this is not the equivalent of an external examiner's review of a programme. The visitors would like to be assured that the education provider's regulations show that an external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC register or otherwise agreed appropriately qualified external examiner will be appointed.

Recommendations

2.2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards.

Recommendation: The education provider should update the admissions procedure to include appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards for non-technicians and paramedic returners with lapsed registration.

Reason: The documentation made it clear that this programme was a route for technicians to paramedics. Therefore, applicants applying to this programme will have completed the technician modules. It is not likely that non-technicians will apply to enrol onto the programme, however, visitors advise that any non-technician applicants are made more aware what professional and/or academic entry standards are required if they have not completed technician levels.

3.6 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Recommendation: The education provider should include scholarly and research activity within the programme for staff development.

Reason: Although there was opportunity for staff to undertake CPD activity there was no drive for staff to undertake research and scholarly development. It is understood that time and funding is stretched but where opportunity arises, the visitors felt that appropriate activity should be taken.

3.12 The resources provided, both on and off site, must adequately support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider the stock of practical resources for each ambulance training centre within the trust.

Reason: The programme team explained that although there was an acceptable amount of kit for all three ambulance training centres within the trust, staff have to deliver resources around the region and borrow from others. Whilst this currently works, the visitors felt that perhaps a longer term solution is required that better meets the flexible demands of delivery in a large ambulance trust.

3.13 The learning resources, including the stock of periodicals and subject books, IT facilities, including internet access, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Recommendation: The visitors wished to recommend that the education provider strengthen the book lists to provide a more up to date collection, with sufficient resources available to the increasing number of students.

Reason: Whilst the visitors felt that the resources on the programme were adequate they felt that the programme team could review the range and currency

of the texts being used, as the students would benefit from a wider range of texts and more current editions being utilised on the programme.

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum to enable safe and effective practice.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider standardising the delivery pattern of practice and theory across all ambulance centres within the trust.

Reason: Whilst the programme team clearly delivers a programme across all training centres which includes theory and practical learning, and in turn enables safe and effective practice, students explained there are differences between training centres. Some centres have all the theory first and then have placements. Another training centre has theory interspersed with practice, alternating between the two. This latter way of teaching theory and practice was seen as most favourable by the students.

4.7 Where there is inter-professional learning, the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Recommendation: The education provider should further develop and integrate existing examples of inter-professional learning with other appropriate health professionals.

Reason: The programme team explained that inter-professional teaching was carried out and that the skills and knowledge of each professional group was adequately addressed. However the visitors felt that this could be enhanced by including several healthcare professions. It is recommended that if this happens, consideration of the skills and knowledge of each separate professional group is needed.

5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider broadening the range of placements used for student experience.

Reason: The visitors felt that the range of placements that students attend was appropriate for learning outcomes on the programme. However, the programme team should take the opportunity to consider other placement sites that could enhance the range of learning experiences in a variety of environments.

Mr Bob Fellows
Mr Gordon Pollard
Mr Derek Adrian-Harris