

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Programme name	Paramedic-in-training
Validating body/awarding body	IHCD (part of Edexcel)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC register	Paramedic
Date of visit	28-29 May 2008

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence.....	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions	6
Recommendations	20

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. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 20 May 2009. At the Committee meeting on 20 May 2009, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

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 an HPC only visit. The education provider and validating/awarding body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Mr Vince Clarke (Paramedic) Mr James Petter (Paramedic) Dr Paul Brown (Radiographer)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Miss Elisa Simeoni
Proposed student numbers	20
Initial approval	September 2000
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	March 2009
Chair	Mr Paul Nicholson (Northern Ireland Ambulance Service)
Secretary	Ms Jane Shaw (Northern Ireland Ambulance Service)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
Training and common core syllabus for ambulance personnel (Paramedic)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benchmarking Mapping IHCD competencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External verifiers' report from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review a programme specification prior to the visit as these documents do not exist.

The HPC did not review a practice placement handbook prior to the visit as a separate practice placement handbook has not been produced but information relating to practice placements was included in the documentation.

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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 30 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 33 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 may have identified, within the condition, those which they feel the education provider may wish to discuss with the validating/awarding body.

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

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation for the programme to follow the guidance provided in the HPC “Regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers”.

Reason: From the documentation submitted, it was clear that the advertising materials for the programme did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. Therefore, in order to provide applicants with the correct information to make an informed choice about whether to join the programme, the visitors felt the text used for advertising must be amended. In particular, “state registration” is used as a term in the documentation and does not reflect the independence of the HPC or its performance of its regulatory function through protection of title. Moreover, the text used for advertising must be amended to clearly state that successful completion of the programme will lead to eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council.

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must review the advertising documentation to clearly indicate that a manual handling assessment will take place in the programme.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, there was no reference to the manual handling assessment that will take place during the programme. Because of the particularity of this assessment and in order that students are informed about this before they enrol on the programme, the visitors felt that this information must be included in the advertising materials.

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 review the programme documentation to make explicit how evidence of spoken English is established in the selection process.

Reason: In the documentation provided, there was no reference made to the International English Learning Testing System (IELTS) level required for applicants whose first language is not English. The visitors felt that the education

provider must include this information in the documentation in order to make this requirement clear to international applicants.

2.2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must review the admissions procedures to ensure that enhanced criminal convictions checks have been completed by the point of registration onto the programme.

Reason: In the documentation submitted and in discussion with the programme team during the visit, it was clear that criminal convictions checks are undertaken before the start of the programme and also by those before direct entry into the programme as a consequence of already holding the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) award. However, it was clear that there is no criminal conviction checks requirement for people who are already enrolled onto the programme after passing the interview for taking the 11 weeks paramedic course. Therefore, the visitors felt that all people must complete enhanced CRB checks before commencing the 11 weeks paramedic course.

2.2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including Accreditation of Prior Learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning policy (AP(E)L) is clearly articulated within the admissions procedures.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning was not clearly detailed. Therefore, the visitors felt that the programme documentation must demonstrate that the AP(E)L taken into account is mapped against the paramedic-in-training programme to make sure that students who are eligible for AP(E)L meet the standards of proficiency for the profession once they have successfully completed the programme.

3.5 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the staff profile for the programme to ensure that specialist expertise is sufficient to support all areas of the programme.

Reason: In the CVs submitted in the documentation, it appeared that elements of the programme were delivered by staff with no specific knowledge about these areas. Therefore, the visitors felt that there is a need to involve staff with relevant expertise and knowledge to contribute to the delivery of the programme: medical law and ethics, clinical audit, research and psychology.

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

Condition: The education provider must put in place a programme for staff development to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Reason: In the documentation submitted and in discussion with the programme team during the visit, it was clear that there is currently no formal programme in place for staff development. The visitors felt that such a programme must be put in place in order to ensure continuing professional and research development for staff at Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

3.9 Where students participate as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The programme team must review the existing consent form to include a clause about taking part in audiovisual recording for the purpose of their education.

Reason: During the tour of facilities, the visitors were shown that students can be recorded audio-visually during practical sessions. Therefore, the visitors felt that the existing consent form must be amended to make sure that when students are acting as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching, they agree on being recorded audio-visually.

3.11 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide an attendance policy and clearly articulate in the documentation when attendance is compulsory.

Reason: In the documentation submitted and in discussion with students, there was no evidence that an attendance policy was in place and that attendance requirements were clearly communicated to students. Therefore, the visitors felt that the education provider must clearly communicate to students through documentation what the attendance requirements are and any consequences of missing compulsory teaching.

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 programme team must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect the following standards of proficiency and demonstrate how these learning outcomes are addressed and assessed.

- 1a.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**
- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council
 - understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and well being
 - be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession
- 1a.2 Registrant paramedics must be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner**
- 1a.3 Registrant paramedics must understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality**
- 1a.4 Registrant paramedics must understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent**
- 1a.5 Registrant paramedics must be able to exercise a professional duty of care**
- 1a.6 Registrant paramedics must 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 Registrant paramedics must understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise**
- 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.1 Registrant paramedics must be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers**
- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
 - understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals
 - be able to make appropriate referrals

- understand the range and limitations of operational relationships between paramedics and other healthcare professionals
- recognise the principles and practices of other healthcare professionals and healthcare systems and how they interact with the role of a paramedic

1b.3 Registrant paramedics must be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers

- understand how communications 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 disability
- 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 the 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 Registrant paramedics must 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.2 Registrant paramedics must be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques

- understand the need to consider the assessment of both the health and social care needs of patients and carers

2b.1 Registrant paramedics must 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 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 Registrant paramedics must 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.5 Registrant paramedics must 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 Registrant paramedics must 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 Registrant paramedics must 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 Registrant paramedics must know 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
- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care

- 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
- 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:
 - 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: From the discussions with the programme team, the students and a review of the documents, the visitors felt that the programme did not clearly link all of the learning outcomes to successful attainment of the standards of proficiency. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must clearly articulate where the above standards of proficiency are met in the programme to ensure that those who complete the programme are safe and effective practitioners.

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

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to include evidence of learning outcomes for reflective practice methodology and evidence-based practice.

Reason: In the documentation submitted and in discussions with the programme team and students, the visitors did not find any evidence showing that reflective thinking and evidence based practice were delivered in the programme. Therefore they felt that such evidence must be provided to make sure that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence the practice-based element of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation supplied by the programme team, information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that staff numbers and qualifications are adequate, was not provided. Although a list of practice placements educators was provided during the visit, the visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that the education provider has mechanisms in place to regularly assure the adequacy of placement staff.

5.3.1 The practice placement settings must provide a safe environment.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence the practice-based element of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation supplied by the programme team, information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement practice settings offer a safe environment to students, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that the education provider has mechanisms to assure practice placements provide a safe environment.

5.3.2 The practice placement settings must provide safe and effective practice.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence the practice-based element of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation supplied by the programme team, information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement practice settings provide a safe and effective practice environment for students, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that the education provider has mechanisms in place to assure safe and effective practice in the practice environment.

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

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate how the number and range of placements are appropriate to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation submitted there was no evidence of placements other than the 4 week hospital placement. Moreover, the visitors were unable to assess how the achievement of the learning outcomes was appropriate for the 4 week hospital placement. Therefore the visitors felt that the education provider must revisit the number and range of placements as well as the assessment process to articulate how the placements are linked to the learning outcomes.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to provide evidence of the audit that placements are subjected to before students commence the practice-based element of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation supplied by the programme team information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement environments are suitable, was not provided. The visitors wish to see evidence of the audits that hospital site placements go through and an example audit for the ambulance station environments in order to ensure that this standard is appropriately met.

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 ensure that the learning outcomes during placement are clearly articulated to students and practice placement educators in formal documentation.

Reason: During the meetings with the practice educators and students, it was clear that information about the learning outcomes to be achieved given by the education provider to these groups was not sufficient. Therefore the visitors felt that the learning outcomes to be achieved during placement must be included in formal documentation (eg a practice placement handbook).

5.7.2 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the expectations of duration attendance and documentation relating to placements are clearly articulated to students and to practice placement educators in formal documentation.

Reason: During the meetings with the practice educators and students, it was clear that the information about the expectations of professional conduct given by the education provider to these groups of people was not sufficient in the context of placements other than the 4 week hospital placement. Therefore the visitors felt that the education provider must revisit preparation for placements that are other than the 4 week hospital placement.

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 ensure that the expectations of professional conduct during placement are clearly articulated to students and to practice placement educators in formal documentation.

Reason: During the meetings with the practice educators and students, it was clear that the information about the expectations of professional conduct given by the education provider to these groups of people was not sufficient. Therefore the visitors felt that the expectations of professional conduct must be included in formal documentation (eg a practice placement handbook).

5.7.4 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure.

Condition: The education provider must ensure students and practice placement educators are provided with detailed information about the assessment procedures, including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure in formal documentation.

Reason: During the meetings with the practice placement educators and students, it was clear that the information about the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure, given by the education provider to these groups of people was not sufficient. Therefore the visitors felt that formal documentation including the assessment procedures, and including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure must be produced (eg a practice placement handbook).

5.7.5 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The education provider must ensure students and practice placement educators are provided with detailed information about the communication and lines of responsibility in formal documentation.

Reason: During the meeting with the practice placement educators and with the students, it was clear that the information about the communication and lines of responsibility given by the education provider to these groups was not sufficient. Therefore the visitors felt that the communication and lines of responsibility must be included in formal documentation (eg a practice placement handbook).

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

Condition: The education provider must provide a list of the practice placement educators and evidence of the process in place ensuring that practice placement educators have relevant qualifications and experience.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider, there was no evidence about the qualifications and experience of practice placements educators. Therefore the visitors felt that the programme team must provide a list of the practice placements educators as well as explicit criteria on the qualifications and the experience required by the education provider to be practice placement educators to be assured that these people have relevant qualifications and experience.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that practice placement educators are appropriately registered.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, there was no evidence that practice placement educators were appropriately registered. Therefore the visitors felt that evidence must be provided to demonstrate that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must develop and put in place a process of practice placement educator training.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussions with the programme team and the practice placement educators, it was clear that the education provider has no process in place to deliver mentorship training. Therefore, the visitors felt that a process of practice placement educator training must be commenced in

order to ensure practice placement educators gain the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to fulfil their role.

5.10 The education provider must ensure necessary information is supplied to practice placement providers.

Condition: The education provider must produce a practice placement handbook to formally provide necessary information to practice placement educators.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and in discussion with the practice placement providers, it appeared that not all necessary information was clearly supplied to practice placement educators by the education provider. Therefore the visitors felt that a practice placement handbook must be produced to ensure necessary information is provided to them.

5.11 Practice placement providers must ensure necessary information is available at the appropriate time for both the education provider and students.

Condition: The education provider must put in place a practice placement co-ordination policy.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and in discussion with the practice placement providers, it was clear that the relationship established between the practice placements providers and the education provider is on a historical and informal basis. Therefore, the visitors felt that the education provider must put in place a practice placement co-ordination policy in order to make sure that students and the education provider receive the information they need from placement providers at the appropriate time.

5.13 The placement providers must have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to candidates and students, together with an indication of how this will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that there is a process in place to audit the placement providers in order to make sure that there is an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in place in relation to students.

Reason: While it was felt that placements providers have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in place, the visitors did not see any evidence that the education provider has a process in place to audit the placements providers to be sure that they have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy. Therefore the visitors felt that the education provider must provide evidence that there is a process in place to audit the placement providers.

6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practice.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that formal assessments include professional aspects of practice.

Reason: Since all assessments are skills based and there is no assessment evidence of the standards of proficiency that are listed under the condition against SET 4.1, the visitors felt that the education provider must see evidence that formal assessment include professional aspects of practice.

6.2 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practice safely and effectively.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that formal assessments include professional aspect of practice.

Reason: Since all assessments are skills based and there is no assessment evidence of the standards of proficiency that are listed under the condition against SET 4.1, the visitors felt that the education provider must see evidence that formal assessment include professional aspect of practice.

6.3 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external reference frameworks can be measured.

Condition: The education provider must provide a mapping exercise for assessments against the Health Professions Council's standards of proficiency.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, it was clear that Northern Ireland Ambulance Service complies with IHCD Rules and Regulations and NIAS Clinical Education Assessment, Referrals and Appeals Policy. However, the visitors felt that they need to see a mapping exercise for assessments against the Health Profession Council's standards of proficiency to make sure this standard is met.

6.4 The measurement of student performance and progression must be an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation, and use objective criteria.

Condition: The education provider must provide information to demonstrate that they monitor student performance and to show that objective criteria to assess students are in place.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, there was little evidence about the measurement of student performance during the programme and about the criteria used to assess students. Therefore the visitors felt that the education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that this standard is fully met.

6.5 There must be effective mechanisms in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of moderation and internal verification in relation to practical scenarios.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, there was limited evidence to illustrate the mechanisms in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessment. However, as there are two sites of delivery of the programme, the visitors felt that they need to see evidence for both sites of moderation and internal verification in relation to practical scenarios to make sure this standard is fully met.

6.6 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement.

Condition: The education provider must provide information that demonstrates that assessment procedures are designed to prevent breach of the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics as well as to prevent misconduct.

Reason: In the documentation provided, the assessment methods did not take into account where professional aspects of practice were central to the assessment procedures. The visitors want to be assured that those who completed the programme will be able to meet the HPC standards of proficiency. Therefore the visitors felt that the education provider must clearly articulate in the documentation how assessments take into account breaches of professional behaviour and conduct.

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 programme team must provide evidence that an external examiner has been appointed to assess this programme. In order to meet this standard the external examiner must be from the relevant part of the Register unless alternative arrangements are made with the HPC. The programme documentation must be revisited to state this policy requirement.

Reason: In 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 visits the education provider every year to assess the programme against their rules and regulations. However, the visitors did not feel this was the equivalent of an external examiner's review. The programme team must appoint an appropriate external examiner and clearly state in the documentation that this standard is being followed on the programme.

Recommendations

2.2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider the creation of a policy to manage applications from candidates without an ambulance background (eg RGN, HCA, ODP).

Reason: Although this standard is met, the visitors felt that the education provider should enhance the admissions procedures to manage applications from candidates without an ambulance background.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Recommendation: The education provider should clearly define student numbers and the context of an overall work force plan.

Reason: Although the visitors are confident that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan, they would like to encourage the education provider to consider the future security of the programme and the impact of any potential partnerships with higher education providers on the programme.

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

Recommendation: The programme team should map the programme against the curriculum guidance of the professional body, the College of Paramedics (British Paramedic Association), for the programme to better reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum for the profession.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, there was no evidence that the programme was mapped against the College of Paramedics (British Paramedic Association) curriculum guidance. Therefore, the visitors felt that in order the programme better reflects the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum for the profession, a mapping document against the curriculum guidance of the College of Paramedics (British Paramedic Association) should be submitted.

5.10 The education provider must ensure necessary information is supplied to practice placement providers.

Recommendation: The information supplied to practice placement providers by the education provider should be reviewed after the implementation of a formal practice placement educator training programme.

Reason: As the education provider must develop and put in place a process of practice placement educator training, the visitors felt that the information provided to practice placement providers in the future practice placement educators' handbook should be adapted.

Mr Vince Clarke
Mr James Petter
Dr Paul Brown