

Education Visitors' Report (Approval of a Programme)

Name of Educational Institution	Coventry University
Programme Name	Master of Chiropractic (MChiro)
Proposed Start Date of Programme	September 2025 (now September 2026)
Date of Visit	18 & 19 September 2024

Panel Chair	Grahame Pope
Panel Members	Sharon Oliver, Hazel Jensen, Daniel Heritage
Observers	Penny Bance
Panel Secretary	Elizabeth Austin

Introduction
<p>Coventry University made a full Stage 3 programme submission to the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) in March 2024 for consideration by the Education Committee at its April 2024 meeting.</p> <p>The programme submission was analysed by an Approval Panel (the Panel) consisting of two lay and two registrant Education Visitors.</p> <p>The Education Committee agreed that the submission may proceed to Stage 4 of the recognition pathway. Given that this is a new programme at a new institution, the Committee decided that the full Approval Panel for that visit would also comprise two registrant and two lay visitors.</p> <p>On 22 August 2024, the Panel convened to discuss areas requiring further exploration based on their analysis of the programme submission. The Panel focussed on areas in Sections One and Two of the Education Standards that remained 'Partially Met' or 'Not Met', after Coventry's March submission.</p> <p>Ahead of the Stage 4 visit, the Panel shared an agenda with the University, which included a tour the campus and meetings with senior management, teaching and support staff, potential placement providers and students enrolled on current healthcare programmes.</p>

Staff members, groups, facilities and resources seen			
	Yes	No	N/A
Dean/ pro-vice-chancellor/deputy vice chancellor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative(s) from validating institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Senior management responsible for programme resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Students*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clinic facilities **	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Resources (e.g. IT, library facilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	Please specify		

How areas of concern were addressed.

During the pre-meeting on 22 August, the Panel highlighted areas of interest or concern that had previously been identified in the submission analysis that would be explored in further detail at the visit. During the event these were addressed through a series of meetings with senior staff and stakeholders.

18 September 2024

Tour of facilities

The Panel toured the university campus and teaching facilities, accompanied by the Head and two Associate Heads of the School of Science and an external chiropractic academic who contributed to the programme.

During the visit to the 'Alison Gingell' building, where the chiropractic teaching would take place, the Panel observed paramedic, nursing and midwifery suites, an operating theatre, teaching rooms, breakout / self-study areas and numerous staff offices. They also visited the established sports therapy clinic, which could also be used as the chiropractic clinic for the first cohort of students. The use of this shared clinic space will be reviewed as student numbers increase.

The Panel was also shown a clinical skills plinth room, currently used by physiotherapy, sport and exercise therapy and occupational therapy students, which will also be used for chiropractic clinical training sessions. Plans are in place to purchase chiropractic tables and students would have access to this room outside of their timetabled hours if staff supervision was available.

Additionally, the Panel toured the large library building where they observed the English, maths and academic writing support areas, as well as laptop loan facilities, which the team stated ensures digital equity for students.

Following the tour, the Panel noted that it was evident that significant investment in resources had been made.

Meeting one: Staff responsible for self-directed learning and the virtual learning system (VLE)

The Panel requested an overview of the library systems, available resources and the VLE available to students. The library team outlined the range of both physical and online chiropractic resources already accessible for the programme, presenting specific examples to the Panel. The library team explained they manage the reading lists, secure necessary licenses, and prioritise e-licenses to allow off-campus access for students. Additionally, the team clarified that budgeting for library resources is managed centrally by the school's budget leader, rather than being allocated to individual programmes. The Panel was given a demonstration of the library system, showcasing its functionality and range of resources. Students are provided with induction sessions tailored to their study level and can book personalised academic support sessions.

The Panel was informed that the University utilises a bespoke online platform called AULA, which plays a central role in student learning and support. AULA includes both module-specific content and broader community pages, where students can engage in discussions by posting and commenting on threads. Digital submission and assessment

for written work are integrated into AULA, while practical assessments are conducted in person. The Panel also observed a demonstration of the platform.

Additionally, students have access to Engageli, a platform that supports synchronous and asynchronous collaborative learning, as well as PebblePad, which is used to manage placement handbooks, allowing practice educators to monitor and sign off on students' progress during placements.

The Learning Technology Team assured the Panel that the VLE is fully accessible to all students, including those with specific needs. The team provided examples of the accessibility features with the Panel.

Students are allocated one dedicated "course hour" per week during term time to engage with various support services. This dedicated time encourages collaborative work with different services to enhance their learning experience.

Meeting two: Staff responsible for student support services

The Panel met with representatives from the Student Union, the Talent Team, Student Experience, Phoenix + a student success coach to discuss student support systems.

The Panel enquired about the process for assessing students with additional needs and the range of support in place. The team provided examples of pre-admission strategies that enable staff to monitor and assist prospective students. Once enrolled, the wellbeing team coordinates support for students, ensuring academic staff are informed of necessary accommodations. Attendance and assessment monitoring systems facilitate early interventions for at-risk students, while students can schedule 15 minute appointments with academic staff to address academic concerns. Bursaries and scholarships are available to help students overcome financial barriers.

The team highlighted the self-declaration process for students facing personal challenges alongside a referral system where staff can direct students to the wellbeing team for welfare and mental health support.

The Student Union (SU) representative explained they also offer additional advice on academic, social, and welfare matters and organise Student Voice meetings for feedback on programmes and student experiences. Chiropractic students would be encouraged to join or establish societies, with support provided by the SU.

The Panel was informed that each student is assigned a success coach offering pastoral support and early interventions, through three key touchpoints per semester. This involves support to meet deadlines and manage workloads, access to support services, peer support networks and skills development.

The Panel was introduced to Phoenix +, which aims to bring students together to develop skills and knowledge in a range of areas. Examples of immersive experiences, workshops and mentorship opportunities focused on employability and graduate skills were shared with the Panel.

Additionally, the team outlined the careers and placement support available through the Talent Team. The team will support the chiropractic placement process, including the consideration of additional needs, before and during placements.

In its private meeting, the Panel commended the university for its comprehensive student support and engagement strategy, as well as the wide range of support services and teams dedicated to helping students succeed in various career paths.

Meeting three: Stakeholders

The Panel met with two key stakeholders: a chiropractic academic who provided expert advice on the programme design and structure, and a clinic owner who toured the

university facilities, including the teaching clinic, to discuss and help shape the chiropractic elements of the programme.

The Panel learned that the chiropractic academic played a key role in reviewing and drafting final curriculum documents, offering guidance on integrating chiropractic principles. He emphasised the shortage of chiropractic educators and the need to train future chiropractors who can transition into teaching roles. He also noted that existing staff within the School possess many transferable skills that could be leveraged for the chiropractic programme. He also shared that while there is enthusiasm for the programme within the local chiropractic community, awareness among local practitioners may still be limited.

Both stakeholders and university managers have taken steps to raise awareness, including sending emails to local chiropractors. However, challenges remain regarding local chiropractors' willingness to provide student placements.

When asked about the demand for chiropractors in the area, the stakeholders, despite no formal consultation, expressed confidence in a strong local demand and a sufficient patient base to support the programme.

19th September

Meeting one: Senior Management Team (SMT)

The Panel met with eight members of the SMT from the College of Engineering, Environment and Science and clarified the purpose of the visit and the processes involved in the approval of the programme. Ahead of the Stage 4 visit, the Panel requested the Team to prepare a PowerPoint presentation outlining the vision for the proposed chiropractic programme.

The Associate Head of School for Quality and Accreditation delivered the presentation and shared that the chiropractic programme aligns with the institution's strategic aims, particularly in terms of employability and widening access to healthcare education. The programme seeks to address the growing demand for chiropractors in the UK while benefiting from its location and widening participation in higher education. The programme will leverage existing expertise within the institution, particularly by adopting an interprofessional education (IPE) approach, encouraging collaboration between chiropractic students and those from other healthcare disciplines.

The Panel noted that the chiropractic programme will be housed within the School of Science, part of the College of Engineering, Environment, and Science. When questioned by the Panel about this placement, the SMT explained that the programme shares scientific foundations with existing programmes, such as sports therapy, but also emphasised the strong sense of collegiality within the school. They highlighted that chiropractic students will collaborate with peers from other healthcare programmes, such as physiotherapy utilising shared facilities to foster interprofessional learning.

The SMT emphasised that the practical learning elements of the programme will be delivered in the Alison Gingell building, where allied health profession programmes are based. Staff expertise in core and basic sciences will underpin the chiropractic curriculum. When asked about staff development, the Panel was informed that staff are supported in their professional development through initiatives like the Aspire Programme and the requirement to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PgCert HE).

Looking forward, the Panel noted the institution's ambition to become the leading chiropractic provider in the UK. There is a strong desire to develop chiropractic research, positioning the institution as an authority in the field.

The Panel noted the recruitment plan, which aims to enrol 20 students in the first year, with growth anticipated over time. While there may be minimal financial losses in the early years, the programme is expected to become profitable as student numbers increase. The institution is committed to teaching out the programme, even if initial recruitment numbers are lower than expected, and is optimistic about attracting both domestic and international students in the long run.

Regarding staff recruitment, the Panel was informed that a part-time chiropractic Curriculum Lead will be recruited to support the programme, with plans in place to help this staff member transition from clinical practice to academia. Two additional full time equivalent positions will also be required. New staff will be encouraged to pursue advanced qualifications, such as a PgCert and potentially a PhD.

The Panel was informed that chiropractic students will initially share the existing Sports Therapy Clinic for their placements, which currently operates twice a week and requires 200 hours of practical experience for sports therapy students. However, the Panel noted that this model would be insufficient to meet the clinical requirements of the chiropractic programme.

The SMT explained that interprofessional learning (IPL) with students from other healthcare disciplines, already exist within the School and shared teaching opportunities have been embedded into the chiropractic programme. While there is potential for collaboration with the School of Health, the Panel noted that these collaborations are not yet fully structured. Additionally, there are opportunities for collaboration with Sports and Exercise students in modules at levels 4 and 6.

When asked about stakeholder and patient engagement with the programme, the SMT explained that the institution plans to continue collaborating with local chiropractors to raise awareness and promote career pathways for graduates. The University also has a well-established service user and carer engagement team, which will be leveraged to involve patients in the programme's development and monitoring, ensuring a strong alignment with real-world healthcare needs.

Students will play an active role in shaping the programme through structured feedback mechanisms. The institution follows a 'You Said, We Did' approach, documenting changes to ensure transparency and accountability.

Meeting two: programme planning and design – Year one

The Panel met with the Course Director for Sport and Exercise Therapy, the Curriculum Lead for Sport, the Head and Associate Head of School for Quality and Accreditation and the external chiropractic academic.

The Panel requested that the programme team outline the philosophy behind the programme structure. The team explained that the chiropractic programme is designed to provide students with hands-on skills early on, providing practical, real-world experience from the outset. As students' progress, they engage with increasingly complex scenarios and research, fostering the development of lifelong skills essential for both clinical practice and broader professional opportunities. This applied approach ensures that graduates are well prepared for the demands of the healthcare landscape.

When questioned about the integration of programme material both horizontally and vertically, the team described the curriculum as a "spiralling" structure and provided examples. This design revisits and expands upon key concepts and skills at various stages of the programme, reinforcing learning and deepening understanding over time.

A key aim of the programme, as outlined by the programme team, is to embed lifelong learning skills, such as adaptability, critical thinking, and innovation. These skills, alongside technical proficiency, aim to ensure that graduates can navigate their career effectively. Additionally, communication skills will be embedded and developed, as they

are vital for successful patient interaction and professional growth within clinical environments. The sports therapy team provided examples of how these skills are currently taught and how they will be developed on the chiropractic programme.

The Panel was also presented with examples of technology integration from the sports therapy programme, with plans for shared sessions at level 4 and level 6. Examples to encourage innovation in chiropractic practice, using tools like TENS machines and therapeutic ultrasound machines were provided. However, the Panel noted that while the technology integration shows potential, there is still work to be done to ensure that it aligns fully with the needs of chiropractic practice.

The Panel queried how interprofessional learning will be included in the programme. They were informed that the programme will adopt a multidisciplinary approach after students establish their professional identity in year one. This approach, encourages collaboration across healthcare professions, better preparing students for the realities of practice. Examples were provided to illustrate how this will be implemented.

The sport and exercise therapy team demonstrated a strong understanding of fitness to practice and the Panel agreed that the chiropractic programme could draw from this model to ensure that students are well prepared for the clinical demands of the profession.

Regarding access to practical spaces, chiropractic students will have access to the sports therapy department's facilities, subject to booking in advance. These sessions will be supervised to ensure that the spaces are used effectively and safely. The team hopes this arrangement will foster collaboration between sports therapy and chiropractic students, offering opportunities for shared learning and practical experience.

In its private discussion, the Panel agreed that specific concerns had been addressed, but noted areas for development, particularly in the integration of technology to better support chiropractic students.

Meeting three: Students

The Panel met with three students from a range of healthcare programmes at the University.

During the meeting with the Panel, students expressed overall satisfaction with the academic support provided by their tutors. They appreciated the proactive nature of tutors who offered one-on-one sessions and group tutorials, as well as the quick email responses they received. Students also praised success coaches and support teams, particularly for consistently signposting relevant resources, which enhanced their academic experience.

Pastoral support, especially during placements, was a notable highlight and students reported regular check-ins from tutors to ensure both their well-being and placement progression. The placement experience was generally positive, with students feeling supported by both hospital staff and academic supervisors. They appreciated the clear learning objectives provided and the structured system of inductions, midpoint meetings, and final reviews to track their progress. However, some challenges were noted, particularly in nursing and physiotherapy placements.

Regarding programme feedback and improvement, students found the module review questionnaires helpful, and they acknowledged the introduction of a "traffic light system" to manage workloads. This system was well-received and eventually implemented across other healthcare programmes. Course representatives were actively involved in evaluations, with nursing students providing feedback on the appropriateness of placement levels, which was taken on board by staff.

Interprofessional learning (IPL) was another area where students benefited, particularly in nursing, where child, mental health, and adult branch cohorts worked together on group

assessments. Students also collaborated with occupational therapy and midwifery students. There was notable interaction between sports therapy and sport science students in undergraduate teaching. One example of IPL was in mental health studies, where service users with learning disabilities took a "flipped approach" and led a teaching session for students, providing a unique, patient-led experience.

Students noted the value of receiving patient feedback during placements, which they used to inform their reflective practice. Sports therapy students particularly appreciated the experience in the on-site clinic, where they could assess members of the public under supervision, building confidence in their treatment skills.

Employment support services were well-regarded, with students aware of the various resources available to them, such as the Talent Team and Handshake app for job opportunities. While students were less familiar with Phoenix +, they believed it offered extracurricular and employability-focused activities. The student coaches, who remain accessible after graduation, were particularly appreciated for their career guidance.

Library and learning resources were frequently used by students, both in-person and online. They found the resources easy to locate and were familiar with requesting additional materials if needed. Support services like the Centre for Academic Writing and maths workshops were highlighted as particularly beneficial. Physiotherapy students also made regular use of subject librarians for their studies.

Finally, students reported positive experiences with the university's IT services. Physiotherapy students noted the usefulness of PebblePad as a digital learning tool, and overall, students found the IT support team helpful in resolving any technical issues efficiently.

Meeting four: Programme planning delivery years 2-4

The Panel met with the Course Director for Sport and Exercise Therapy, the Curriculum Lead for Sport, the Associate Head of School for Quality and Accreditation and the external chiropractic academic.

The Panel requested examples and an overview of programme design and delivery, specifically focusing on the integration of the clinical portfolio, research components, leadership skills, and the introduction of concepts related to ceasing care. In response, the University team provided a detailed explanation of how these areas would be incorporated and developed throughout the programme. They also presented the Panel with specific examples to substantiate their approach in addressing each of these key elements.

The programme team discussed plans to integrate diagnostic imaging into the curriculum, including the observation of diagnostic ultrasound, to enhance students' understanding of these tools. They are also exploring opportunities for students to observe advanced imaging techniques such as MRI scans in external settings, which will expand clinical exposure beyond the university environment.

In the later years of the programme, students will be introduced to the management of comorbidities and complex cases, assessed through case-based evaluations. This will help them develop critical thinking and decision-making skills necessary for handling multifaceted patient conditions. Students will also take a 'Managing a Chiropractic Practice' module designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage and operate a successful chiropractic practice. The module will focus on strategic planning, financial management, and marketing within a healthcare setting.

Additionally, although in its early stages, the team is considering incorporating population health initiatives into the curriculum, which would provide students with a broader understanding of healthcare delivery and prevention strategies.

Meeting five: Meeting with clinic team

The Panel met with the Course Director for Sport and Exercise Therapy, the Curriculum Lead for Sport, the Associate Head of School for Quality and Accreditation, the Associate Dean and the Practice Education Support Unit Manager.

The team was asked to outline the planning process for placements and observation visits. They explained that the programme team collaborates with the university's Talent Team to ensure placement settings meet health, safety, and educational standards. This process involves regular meetings between the university, placement providers, and students to maintain quality and regulatory compliance. All placement providers sign practice education agreements that outline their roles and responsibilities, ensuring alignment with the university's standards.

Although discussions regarding external placements are still in the preliminary stages, the team indicated plans to engage local providers more formally once the programme is validated. A thorough assessment of local providers' willingness to participate in chiropractic placements will be undertaken during the programme's implementation phase.

Currently, the sports therapy team use the InPlace placement system to capture feedback from both students and placement providers, with the goal of continually improving the placement experience. This system could also be adopted for the chiropractic programme.

The team acknowledged some uncertainty regarding the supervision model for chiropractic placements and they are currently reviewing practices from other institutions to determine the most suitable approach. It was confirmed that only chiropractors will supervise students during placements, ensuring guidance from professionals with expertise in the field. Chiropractic students will share the existing Sports Therapy Clinic for placements until student numbers increase.

In its private meeting the Panel identified a few policy gaps, particularly around supervision and placement management, that will require further clarification and development as the programme progresses. However, the Panel was reassured that models and processes from other programmes within the School could be adapted to meet the needs of the chiropractic programme.

Account of verbal summary given to the institution

During the final meeting with the Senior Management Team, the Panel Chair stated that its indicative recommendation to the Education Committee is to:

- recommend approval of the programme with conditions

It was agreed that the approval report would be shared with the University for fact checking by week beginning 7 October 2024 for return to the GCC by 4 November 2024. The report will be presented to the Education Committee at its November meeting. If it is agreed that the programme meets all the Education Standards, the Committee will recommend to the Council of the GCC that the programme should be approved.

The Council of the GCC considers and decides whether to accept the recommendation of the Education Committee. The decision of the Council to recognise a new programme is then progressed to the Privy Council, if required, for its approval.

Recommendation to Education Committee

1. Approve <u>without</u> conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Approve <u>with</u> conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. No approval (insufficient evidence due to serious deficiencies)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conditions for the institution with reasons and timeframe in which they must be met.

1. Review the planning for resources required to support the clinical aspects of the programme and provide an implementation plan. This should include a development timeline, the planned implementation of quality assurance (QA) for placements (including any current QA documentation or policies used in other programmes), and a review of clinical hours. To be provided by March 2025
2. Provide a plan for the inclusion of stakeholder groups (eg local Chiropractic community, service users, carers, students) in the design, delivery, monitoring and quality assurance of the programme. To be provided by September 2025.
3. Review the programme documentation (Programme and Module Specifications) to ensure that (i) the content reflects a focus on contemporary chiropractic practice, and (ii) elements such as collaborative practice are more explicit. To be provided by September 2025
4. Produce a plan to enable the ongoing development of IPL within the Chiropractic programme, utilising opportunities both within and outside of the Institution. To be provided by September 2025
5. Recruit an appropriately qualified Chiropractic programme Lead by July 2025
 - The institution must send copies of the individual's CV to the GCC when the appointment of this staff member has been confirmed.
6. The programme will be subject to Annual monitoring site visits until the first cohort of students have graduated.

Recommendations for the institution

1. To look further at embedding digital technology into the programme
2. To build leadership and management skills further into the programme
3. To build on Standards relating to safeguarding, patient centred care and whistleblowing
4. To review language and/or remove content related to historic aspects of care
5. To review the appropriateness of assessments for each module to ensure each ILO is being assessed

Commendations to the institution

1. Comprehensive student support and engagement strategies
2. Wide range of student centred services dedicated to helping students succeed
3. Well thought out teaching spaces available to students

Signed: *Grahame Pope*

Panel Chair

Date: 11 October 2024