

Assessment for quality and standards initial conditions B7 and B8

The Institute for Optimum Nutrition

Provider legal name: The Institute for Optimum Nutrition

Provider trading name: The Institute for Optimum Nutrition

UKPRN: 10022040

Assessment conducted: 9 February 2026 to 21 May 2026

Reference: OfS 2026.48

Enquiries to: regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk

Publication date: 28 September 2026

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction and background	4
Assessment process	8
Initial condition B7: Quality	8
Initial condition B8: Standards	8
Part 1: Assessment of condition B7 – Quality	10
Condition B1: Academic experience	10
Requirement B1.2	10
Requirement B1.3.a	10
Requirement B1.3.b	14
Requirement B1.3.c	17
Requirement B1.3.d	18
Requirement B1.3.e	20
B1 conclusions	22
Condition B2: Resources, support, and student engagement	23
Requirement B2.2.a (Resources)	23
Requirement B2.2.a (Support)	26
Requirement B2.2.b	29
B2 conclusions	31
Requirement B4.2.a	32
Requirement B4.2.b	37
Requirement B4.2.c	40
Requirement B4.2.d	43
Requirement B4.2.e	44
B4 conclusions	46
Part 2: Assessment of condition B8 – Standards	47
Requirement: Standards	47
Requirement: Student achievement	52
Annex A: Approach to sampling of evidence	56
Annex B: Abbreviations	58

Executive summary

Type of assessment	Initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards)
For	The Institute for Optimum Nutrition
Advice to the OfS on B7 (Option 1)	The Institute for Optimum Nutrition has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration.
Advice to the OfS on B8 (Option 2)	The standards set for the courses The Institute for Optimum Nutrition intends to provide, and the achievement of students on these courses, appropriately reflect sector-recognised standards.

1. This report is an independent assessment of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition (the Institute) about its compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS's) initial conditions of registration for quality (condition B7) and standards (condition B8).
2. The report shows the findings of an independent assessment team. It does not represent a decision by the OfS about the Institute's compliance with these conditions of registration.
3. The OfS's regulatory framework sets out that a higher education provider wishing to access the benefits of registration must register with the OfS.¹
4. As part of the registration process, the OfS must assess whether a provider satisfies the initial conditions of registration, including initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards).
5. Concerning the OfS's initial condition of registration for quality (condition B7), the assessment team found that, if registered, the Institute has credible plans that would allow it to comply with the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration for academic experience (condition B1), resources, support and student engagement (condition B2), and assessment and awards (condition B4).
6. Concerning the OfS's initial condition of registration for standards (condition B8), the assessment team found that, if it is registered, the standards set and applied for any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course that the Institute intends to provide appropriately reflect applicable sector-recognised standards.

How we assess providers applying to register

The OfS will assess the applications and relevant evidence of higher education providers seeking registration with it to determine whether they satisfy the initial conditions of registration. For providers that applied for registration on or after 1 May 2022, this includes an assessment of whether the provider satisfies initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards) as set out in the regulatory framework (November 2022).

¹ See OfS, [Regulatory framework for higher education in England](#).

For this assessment, the OfS appoints an assessment team that includes external academic experts. The assessment may include a visit to the provider by the assessment team, after which it produces a report. The report does not consider matters that may have occurred after that period.

As part of the registration process the OfS also assesses risk against the related revised ongoing conditions of registration. These cover the following areas:

- academic experience (condition B1)
- resources, support and student engagement (condition B2)
- assessment and awards (condition B4)
- sector-recognised standards (condition B5).

7. The Institute currently delivers several online courses under a validation arrangement with the University of Portsmouth (see paragraph 18).²
8. Subject to validation by the University of Portsmouth, the Institute is planning to start delivering Level 7 courses from 2027 onwards (see paragraph 19).
9. In accordance with the guidance on registering with the OfS (Regulatory advice 3),³ the OfS decided that it was necessary to undertake an assessment visit to the Institute to gather evidence and provide advice to inform its decision about whether the Institute satisfies the initial conditions B7 and B8. The OfS decided that this assessment should be undertaken by assessors able to provide expert academic judgement.
10. The purpose of the assessment is to provide advice to the OfS to enable it to decide whether the Institute satisfies initial conditions B7 and B8 and whether there is any regulatory risk.
11. The evidence from the assessment informs the OfS's decisions about whether to register the Institute and, if registered, whether any mitigation is necessary.
12. The OfS appointed an assessment team that consisted of two academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff. It asked the team to give its advice and judgement about the Institute's compliance with initial conditions B7 and B8.
13. The team considered a range of information submitted by the Institute as part of its application for registration.
14. The assessment team visited the Institute in May 2026, during which time it met with senior managers, academic and support staff including visiting lecturers and clinical supervisors, external examiners, representatives from the awarding partner, and students. Given the nature of the online provision, the assessors observed live and recorded teaching sessions prior to the visit.

² Validation enables a provider to deliver higher education when it might not otherwise have the expertise and resources to create new courses itself, or have the powers to make the award.

³ See OfS, under '2023 guidance', Regulatory advice 3: Registration of English higher education providers with the OfS.

Introduction and background

15. The Institute was established in 1984 and is a registered education charity and a company limited by guarantee. Its vision is 'Optimum nutrition for all throughout life'. Its mission is 'to educate and enthuse, instilling personalised nutrition as the foundation of health for all'.
16. The Institute's objectives are to advance the education of public and healthcare professionals in all matters relating to nutrition and to preserve and protect the health of the general public by giving advice and assistance, and where necessary treatment, through nutrition. The primary means by which the Institute seeks to achieve its objectives is through the training of registered nutritional therapists in the principles and practice of optimum nutrition, as complementary to orthodox medicine. The Institute is the largest trainer of nutritional therapists in the UK.
17. The Institute has an office in Richmond upon Thames. It has delivered courses online since 2013 and, since the Covid pandemic, has delivered all courses online. A small number of enhancement days, which provide extra opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and understanding of specific areas of nutrition, are offered as in-person events. These are outside the curriculum and are not compulsory.
18. The Institute currently delivers the following online courses under a validation arrangement with the University of Portsmouth:
 - BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy
 - BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy top-up option (available to students with existing nutritional therapy diplomas at Level 6)
 - CertHE personalised diet and health (Level 4)
 - Graduate Diploma in integrative functional nutrition (Level 6)
 - Graduate Diploma in integrative functional nutrition with clinical practice (Level 6)
 - Diploma in nutritional therapy (currently being phased out until 2027)
 - credit-bearing short courses (each module can be taken independently, and, for most modules, credits can be accumulated towards either the Graduate Diploma or degree).
19. Subject to validation by the University of Portsmouth, the Institute is planning to start delivering the following Level 7 online courses from 2027 onwards:
 - Postgraduate Certificate in personalised nutrition and lifestyle education (as an intermediate award for students who do not progress to the full Postgraduate Diploma)
 - Postgraduate Diploma in personalised nutrition and lifestyle medicine
 - Top-up masters' in personalised nutrition and lifestyle medicine practice.
20. In line with the professional body requirement for advanced courses for specialist areas of practice, these will be micro-credential courses at Level 7. The accumulated credits will serve

as the entry requirement to pathway two of the top-up masters' course. The Institute has held discussions with the University of Portsmouth about validating the courses using the awarding partner's flexible framework, and the proposal and development plan to introduce the courses was approved by the Institute's Board of Trustees in February 2026. The validation event for these courses is due to take place in summer 2026.

21. The Institute has been delivering the part-time BSc course since September 2020 and the full-time course since September 2022. The course is available as a full- or part-time option (three years full-time; four and a half years minimum to eight years maximum part-time). The course has two pathways. Pathway one is for training new practitioners and allows students to start the BSc course from the beginning and complete all the modules. Pathway two is available for qualified nutritional therapists, who meet the necessary requirements for recognition of prior learning, to enter at Level 6 to top up their existing nutritional therapy diploma to the BSc.
22. The course has been accredited by the Nutritional Therapy Education Commission (NTEC) since 2020 and was subsequently reaccredited in 2023. Being accredited by NTEC enables graduates to register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), the independent UK regulator for complementary healthcare practitioners, and to join the British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine (BANT) as full practising members. BANT acts as the professional body for registered nutritional therapy practitioners in one-to-one clinical practice, and for BANT registered nutritionists who work with groups, communities and the wider industry, in academia, and in a non-clinical setting.
23. The Institute began delivering the Level 6 Graduate Diploma in February 2021. Students have the option of full- or part-time study (one or two years, respectively). The course was accredited by NTEC in August 2021. To be eligible to join BANT and register with the CNHC, students can additionally complete a clinical practice module. The course is targeted at existing medical and complementary therapy practitioners who wish to add nutritional therapy to their existing health skills.
24. The Institute began delivering the Level 4 CertHE course in February 2022. Again, students have the option of studying full- or part-time. The CertHE comprises Level 4 of the BSc course and is not accredited by NTEC. Students can, however, complete the CertHE and progress to the remaining degree modules to exit with a BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy. The CertHE enables students to work as diet and lifestyle educators and to support individual clients and groups with their wellness goals. The course is accredited by the Federation of Holistic Therapists.
25. The Institute is also accredited by the British Accreditation Council (BAC), which provides a quality assurance scheme for independent further and higher education in the UK.
26. Students are typically mature and taking a part-time route through study that fits with existing family and work commitments. The Institute has 424 students (272.8 FTE), made up of:
 - 22 full-time and 286 part-time (213.6 FTE) students on the BSc course
 - Four full-time and 36 part-time (28.1 FTE) students on the CertHE course
 - Ten full-time and 30 part-time (25 FTE) students on the Graduate Diploma course

- 36 part-time (6.1 FTE) students on standalone credit-bearing short courses.

27. In addition, among the student demographic:

- more than 94 per cent are female
- more than 78 per cent have the UK as their country of domicile, with the remainder classed as overseas
- approximately 78 per cent are classified as white British or white 'other'
- the most common age group (nearly 39 per cent) is 41 to 50 years, followed by 31 to 40 years (nearly 29 per cent) and 51 to 60 years (just over 19 per cent)
- nearly two-thirds of students had a bachelors' or masters' degree as their highest qualification on entry
- more than 90 per cent declared 'no known disability'.

28. The Institute had 328 students in academic year 2022-23. This grew to 452 students in 2024-25 and now stands at 424 students. Numbers are projected to grow at 4 per cent per year until 2028-29, which would mean the Institute having approximately 477 students by then.

29. The Institute has 36 permanent, contracted staff (13 full-time and 23 part-time) and 40 self-employed (zero hours) staff. The latter can carry out multiple roles, which include visiting lecturers (n = 19), assessment markers (n = 15), clinic supervisors (n = 7) and research supervisors (n = 7).

30. The Institute's governance is overseen by a Board of Trustees, which holds ultimate decision making power and is responsible for ensuring the charity fulfils its aims. It currently consists of eight board members and four senior managers (Chief Executive Officer, Head of Finance, Head of Corporate Services, and the Dean). The day-to-day operations are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management team, with the latter reporting to the Board of Trustees. The responsibility for quality lies with the Dean. The board meets at least four times a year and receives feedback from several committees including the Education Committee and the Student Voice Committee.

31. Academic standards are maintained through the Education Committee, which receives reports from various bodies, and an annual review from external examiners. The committee consists of four members of the Board of Trustees together with the Chief Executive Officer, Dean, and Head of Undergraduate Courses. It meets twice a year in May and November. Its main tasks are to:

- review students' statistics and student voice feedback
- review academic boards, accreditation and validation partners' feedback
- review policies and procedures
- consider and approve academic developments.

32. The terms of reference for the Course Board of Study were previously set by the University of Portsmouth. While the University of Portsmouth made the decision to discontinue its Course Board of Study in the current academic year, the Institute decided to continue to run these meetings. The draft terms of reference for the Institute's own meetings were approved by the Education Committee in May 2026. Responsibilities include course development and review, and academic regulations. Currently, the Course Board of Study meets twice a year and has a core membership of the Dean, Head of Undergraduate Courses, Assistant Head of Undergraduate Courses, module coordinators, academic study skills, and academic registrar.
33. The Student Voice Committee meets twice a year. The committee informs the Course Board of Study, which in turn report to the Education Committee and finally the Board of Trustees. The Dean chairs the meetings of the Student Voice Committee. Membership includes: a student representative for each full- and part-time course and per intake; the Head of Undergraduate Courses; Assistant Head of Undergraduate Courses; module coordinators; academic study skills; academic registrar; one Board of Trustees observer; and the University of Portsmouth Programme Lead (Education Partnerships). Expectations for the wider student voice are also set out in the University of Portsmouth's Student voice policy.

Assessment process

Initial condition B7: Quality

34. The Institute submitted a quality plan and supporting evidence, as required by the OfS's guidance for providers applying for registration (Regulatory advice 3).⁴
35. The assessment team requested further evidence from the Institute, which was received on 2 April and 30 April 2026. It was also given access to the Institute's virtual learning environment (VLE) from 25 February 2026 until the end of the assessment.
36. The team undertook an assessment visit on 20 and 21 May 2026. During the visit, the team met with senior managers, academic and support staff including visiting lecturers and clinical supervisors, external examiners, representatives from the awarding partner, and students. Given the nature of the online provision, the assessors observed live and recorded teaching sessions prior to the visit.
37. The team used this evidence to provide advice on whether the Institute complies with the requirements set out in initial condition B7. B7 requires that the Institute has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions of registration B1, B2 and B4, and requires it to have the capacity and resources to deliver these plans. As well as the advice provided by the team in this report, the OfS is likely to draw on evidence the Institute submitted in relation to the other conditions of registration to make a judgement about whether it has the necessary capacity and resources to deliver its plans in practice.

Initial condition B8: Standards

38. The Institute submitted information relevant to the academic standards of the courses it intends to provide if registered, including course documentation, programme specifications and module outlines.⁵
39. The Institute submitted evidence of student achievement in assessed work and associated records of this achievement for courses it intends to provide if registered. (See also Annex A for the approach to sampling.)
40. Because the Institute provides a limited number of courses, the assessment team has considered information relevant to all the courses the Institute intends to provide upon registration in reaching its view on B8.
41. The 'sector-recognised standards' are set out in a document published by the OfS.⁶ These are the standards that all registered providers are required to meet, and were used by the team for its assessment.

⁴ See OfS, under '2023 guidance' Regulatory advice 3: Registration of English higher education providers with the OfS.

⁵ See Annex I, 'Guidance for providers on the assessment of initial condition B8 (standards)', under '2023 guidance' at OfS, Regulatory advice 3: Registration of English higher education providers with the OfS.

⁶ See OfS, Sector-recognised standards.

42. The standards the OfS has identified as applicable are:
- A.1: Qualifications at each level
 - A.2: Volumes of credit
 - A.3: Qualification descriptors, specifically Levels 4 to 6:
 - A.3.1 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 4
 - A.3.2 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 5
 - A.3.3 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 6
 - B: Classification descriptors for Level 6 bachelors' degrees.
43. The team considered the evidence available to provide advice on whether the Institute complies with the following requirements set out in condition of registration B8: that the Institute demonstrates, in a credible manner, that any standards to be set or applied in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the Institute (if registered), whether or not the Institute is the awarding body, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.

Part 1: Assessment of condition B7 – Quality

44. This section sets out advice on whether the Institute for Optimum Nutrition has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration.

Condition B1: Academic experience

Requirement B1.2

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience?

45. The assessment team considered the Institute's plans to ensure that students registered on each higher education course will receive a high quality academic experience. In doing so, the team first considered the factors set out at B1.3, alongside any other information relevant to ensuring a high quality academic experience.

Requirement B1.3.a

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is up to date?

Advice to the OfS

46. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is up to date. This is because it uses effective processes to ensure courses are current and, in conjunction with the awarding partner, it effectively monitors and critically reviews courses to keep them up to date.

Reasoning

47. The team examined a wide range of information to assess whether the Institute has credible plans to keep its courses up to date, including course and module specifications, module handbooks, regulations handbook, quality handbook, terms of reference and minutes of relevant committees, student engagement policy, external examiners' reports, accreditation reports, and staff CVs. The team also held meetings with senior and academic staff, visiting lecturers, external examiners, and students.
48. The management and governance structures at the Institute provide sufficient opportunities to assure, review and enhance course and module content across the provision and ensure it is appropriately informed by recent developments. For example, the Education Committee reviews twice-yearly student statistics and student feedback, accreditation and awarding partner feedback, and reviews policies and gives consideration to academic developments. Quality governance is further enhanced through a strong and mature working relationship

with the Institute's awarding partner (the University of Portsmouth). Where appropriate, the Institute's effective practices are informed and monitored by those of its awarding partner.

49. Under the collaborative partnership arrangement, the Institute is responsible for the design, development and delivery of courses with guidance available currently from the university through its curriculum framework specification and, from autumn 2027, through its connected curriculum policy. The team saw evidence in module handbooks and in discussions with staff and students that module learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessments reflect, where appropriate, the five principles outlined in the curriculum framework specification. Relevant examples of these principles for section B1.3.a include a coherent curriculum based on academic, subject and research excellence (principle 1), and an agile curriculum that is informed by relevant developments, innovations and professional practices in its subject areas (principle 2).
50. Before courses are submitted to the university for approval, they must first be submitted to the Education Committee before being approved by the academic management team, senior management team and the Board of Trustees. The monitoring of courses, including ensuring they remain relevant and contemporary, is a shared activity between the Institute and its awarding partner. The Institute follows its policy for course monitoring and review as well as carrying out annual audits for each module, and presents an annual report for each course resulting in findings and actions from the module audits (see paragraphs 52 to 53). In addition, it submits an annual quality priority plan to the university, which has replaced the annual course report. Although the plan is a requirement of the university, the Institute uses it to inform its own quality cycle. The team met with the university's programme lead for educational partnerships, who spoke of the strong reciprocal relationship with academic and senior staff at the Institute. In addition, the university's head of corporate services is a member of various committees at the Institute, giving the awarding partner further oversight of the higher education provision.
51. The oversight of modules is managed by module coordinators who report to the Head of Undergraduate Courses. Module coordinators are also responsible for visiting lecturers who may teach on their modules. The team was provided with access to all the course specifications and module handbooks and this confirmed further that content is appropriately informed by recent developments in subject matter and professional and industry standards.
52. The quality handbook states that module audits are undertaken as part of the annual review of asynchronous teaching and learning resources. Audits are carried out by module coordinators to check for currency, inclusivity and continuing appropriateness. Once improvements are noted as necessary, approval is then sought from the Head of Undergraduate Courses for development and enhancement. The team saw evidence that audits take place and that requests for module enhancements are approved and implemented. Actions are implemented using a red, amber and green traffic light system to prioritise actions, so that students gain maximum benefit from these enhancements and more urgent requirements are implemented more quickly.
53. As a result of the 2024-25 audits, module coordinators have re-recorded content for several modules and, in addition, visiting lecturers were commissioned to provide new content on a variety of topics including depression, fertility, blood test interpretation, weight loss, child health, cancer, and social media. For the academic year 2025-26, module coordinators were

required to complete their audits by the end of May 2026. Urgent (red) rated content changes and edits are due to be completed by September 2026, when modules will be prepared for the next cohort. Amber rated content changes are due to be completed by December 2026, and any other content changes will be created or commissioned ahead of the commencement of the next cohort. Although the team found it difficult at times to identify and track module enhancements in the documentation provided, it was assured from speaking to staff and students that recommendations are implemented in a timely and appropriate way.

54. The team was able to observe live and recorded teaching sessions as part of its assessment, including access to the associated teaching and learning materials used during the sessions. The use of case studies in the live sessions observed by the team demonstrated application of learning to current practice in nutritional therapy. For example, the observation of the Level 5 module 'Functional Nutrition 2' was centred around a complex case study, with students able to test their understanding of concepts and consider appropriate evidence-based practices. The team saw evidence that content was focused on nutritional practice and the development of their future roles as therapists, as well as being informed by relevant sector, professional and industry standards.
55. For example, the observation of Level 5 teaching demonstrated evidence that students were engaged and challenged to 'apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context,' 'evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study,' and 'use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information and propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis.' Confidence in students engaging with, and demonstrating, evidence for these sector-recognised standards was best demonstrated in synchronous activities. In these, students in breakout groups attempted to develop a treatment plan for a client with complex needs that required each group to examine and justify evidence-based practices, including medication management, that might be suitable to impact positively on client outcomes. This activity tested several skills including literature searching, critique, assessment and planning of potential client needs.
56. From teaching observations and examination of staff CVs, the team is confident that teaching is underpinned by research and evidence-based practices. Staff CVs demonstrate activity in ongoing research projects and publications. For example, the team saw evidence of research relating to the online experience of students at the Institute, and protein and carbohydrate supplements in relation to exercise, testosterone and cortisol. In addition, it is positive that several staff have published during the last five years, including contribution to journals. Based on the evidence and given that many staff continue to have a clinical caseload, the team is confident that teaching sessions are being appropriately informed by recent developments in subject matter, research and evidence-based practices, and professional and industry standards.
57. The Institute has an effective approach to the use of online pedagogy and resources, demonstrated through accreditation reports, observations of teaching sessions, feedback from students, and access to lesson plans, teaching materials, and case studies. For example, student feedback on the Level 4 module 'Modulation of Immune Function' complimented the quality of teaching, while the use of breakout activities, including case studies and quizzes, consolidated learning. Further evidence of the Institute's effective

approach to teaching, learning and assessment is reflected in the reaccreditation report by the BAC in July 2025, which judged the Institute as meeting all criteria, including Section 11, which tested if academic staff are effective in facilitating student learning and engagement. Within these criteria, BAC determined that 'lecturers have the necessary pedagogic skills' and that 'programmes and their constituent courses are delivered in ways that enable students to succeed in developing the knowledge and skills that are required'. During this three-day observation, BAC reported that 'comprehensive planning ensures that lessons meet the needs and learning styles of the students effectively' and that online teaching 'includes a good mixture of group and individual activities holding student interest and supporting learning'.

58. The Institute has been delivering courses online since 2013 so its teaching and learning approaches are well developed. Besides input from core teaching staff and visiting lecturers, many of whom are practising therapists, the Institute employs two instructional designers, who are integral in enabling the Institute to remain responsive to student feedback and industry enhancements. For example, staff and students who met the team reported that substantial improvements had been made to the VLE by the Institute in response to feedback from students in 2025 via the Student Voice Committee. In particular, students reported that significant improvements had been made in access to, and consistency of, information across module sites.
59. In addition, the role of online support coordinator has been created to support module coordinators and teaching staff to make more effective use of these online teaching and learning platforms. During one of the live teaching sessions, the team was able to observe this role in action, when students could not gain access to breakout rooms or evaluation resources. Without compromising teaching or disrupting the session, the online support coordinator ensured that students regained access to the necessary resources and were able to fully engage with the learning opportunities.
60. Section B2.2.a covers staff development and training in more detail (see paragraphs 105 to 107). In summary, the team saw evidence that academic staff have undergone a range of activities focused on maintaining and promoting their professional practice. In addition, many staff members remain in employment in clinical practice and continue to hold roles relevant to industry and professional bodies. Therefore, the team is confident that the evidence from documentation and meetings at the visit reflects a group of staff that remain focused on professional development and current industry practices through various continuing professional development (CPD) activities.
61. The Institute has effective processes for seeking and responding to student feedback, for example through module evaluations and the Student Voice Committee. Additionally, there is evidence that student feedback is reported on and influences the work of the Institute through its formal governance structure. The team was able to track the consideration of student feedback through reference to the minutes and terms of reference of key committees, for example the Education Committee and Course Board of Study. For example, the minutes of the Course Board of Study in May 2024 show discussion of, and a commitment to, review assessment support and case studies to ensure there is sufficient diversity of content and client types. This followed feedback from the Student Voice Committee, which is routinely fed through for discussion at Course Board of Study meetings. In addition, the improvements to the VLE referred to in paragraph 58 have been formally noted through the Course Board of

Study, where learning resources were reported by students as being helpful, allowing flexibility during study, enabling live sessions to be more interactive, and thus engaging and supporting learning.

62. Although at early stages of curriculum development, the team is satisfied that the Institute is working effectively with its awarding partner on developing new Level 7 provision. The team has received extensive details of the development and validation processes that the new courses will go through ready to start in 2027. At the time of the visit, although course and module specifications were not available, the team was confident that the development and approval processes are in place. These include prior experience of developing course documentation and curricula. The team acknowledges commitment by the Institute to work within the principles of the university's connected curriculum. This will ensure that the new courses will be appropriately informed by recent developments in subject matter, fully inclusive and meet both professional and industry standards.
63. Based on documentation, teaching observations, and meetings with staff and students, the team is confident that the provider has robust processes in place to ensure that its provision is representative of current thinking and practices in the subject matter to which each higher education course relates. This includes being appropriately informed by recent:
- subject matter developments, for example reflected in the information contained in course and module documentation and noted during observations of live and recorded teaching sessions
 - research, industrial and professional developments, for example through many staff remaining clinically and research focused and the established links the Institute has with the nutritional therapy industry
 - developments in teaching and learning, including learning resources, for example the skills, experience and support for delivering and managing online learning.

Requirement B1.3.b

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course provides educational challenge?

Advice to the OfS

64. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that each higher education course provides educational challenge. The documentation available demonstrates the rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of higher education courses in the context of the subject matter and the level appropriate to the provider's courses.

Reasoning

65. The team examined a range of documentation relating to the content, pedagogy and assessment of courses taught at the Institute. This included course and module specifications, module handbooks, external examiners' reports, module mapping documents,

accreditation documents, and minutes and action logs of the Student Voice Committee. The team met with a range of staff, students and external stakeholders.

66. The higher education courses are well established and have been validated by the University of Portsmouth. The external examiners for the undergraduate courses have praised the quality and academic rigour of the Institute's courses, and this was confirmed in a meeting with them. Statements made by the external examiners in their reports include:
- learning outcomes and curriculum are appropriate for the qualification level
 - the standards set for assessments are appropriate
 - the standards of student performance are comparable with those in similar subjects in other UK institutions.
67. The team is assured that course and module design and delivery, including learning outcomes, are closely mapped and benchmarked where relevant to the national occupational standards (see also paragraphs 21 to 24). External examiners' reports confirm that the standards indicate that the staff team have addressed and appropriately incorporated relevant subject benchmark and professional and vocational standards into the course.
68. The team's review of learning outcomes, teaching content and assessment for each level of study in the BSc course indicates an appropriate progression of educational challenge from Levels 4 to 6 (see also paragraphs 69 and 150 to 155). For example, students registered on the BSc course take the following modules: 'Foundations of Clinical Practice' at Level 4, 'Clinical Practice 1' at Level 5, and 'Clinical Practice 2' at Level 6. A review of the three modules shows not only an increase in the number of learning outcomes across levels, but an appropriate increase in complexity. For example, at Level 4, students are expected to be able to analyse client data, conduct a diet and lifestyle consultation and demonstrate ownership of learning through self-reflection. At Level 5, expectations are enhanced with students required to justify client interventions and evaluate their knowledge and performance against competency measures. At Level 6, the expectation is that students consolidate and advance skills, apply and integrate learning from other sources, enhance skills and deepen knowledge and, linked to professional behaviours, develop reflective practice as a technique for professional development. In addition, there is evidence of content becoming more complex from topics at Level 4 designed to introduce students to differing components when working with clients, through to Levels 5 and 6 where teaching is increasingly focused on training clinics and working with clients with more complex needs.
69. Across these three modules, the team also notes that module handbooks and assignment briefs are written to reflect increased complexity across summative assessments. For example, at Level 4 in the 'Foundations of Clinical Practice' module, not only is a comprehensive assessment brief prepared for students but the assessments themselves are relatively light, comprising a 1,600-word project, submission of clinical paperwork, and a 30-minute role play submission. In comparison, at Level 6, the 'Clinical Practice 2' module again requires three assessments but with noticeably greater complexity, including a 2,000-word critical appraisal of a functional test, a successful skills assessment as part of students' training clinic consultations, and a total 3,000-word case evaluation and reflective account from a clinical case.

70. A review of all module handbooks shows that learning outcomes, teaching content and learning activities, and assessment activities have been designed to reflect all five principles described in the awarding partner's curriculum framework. Of particular relevance to educational challenge is principle 3, which states that courses should be designed to provide an excellent, inclusive learning experience that engages students and promotes independence and deep learning. Using the three modules referred to in the previous two paragraphs, the team is confident that all seven criteria within principle 3 are met. For example: students are supported in their transition into higher education; learning and assessment is focused on reflection on learning and in practice; across modules, there is evidence of increased active learning; skills necessary for client engagement are developed; information literacy skills, including critique, are developed; and, finally, students are supported to be proactive in recognising and addressing personal development needs.
71. Another example can be seen in the 'Research Project' module, where the development of students as independent and active learners is demonstrated. The module has explicit expectations around active student engagement as independent learners, with teaching and learning centred fully around a model of individual student research supervision. This is designed to assist students to build a credible area of investigation and proactively think independently, analytically and creatively within their areas of investigation within and across discipline boundaries, as required of a hallmark of a University of Portsmouth graduate.
72. The team was able to observe live and recorded teaching sessions, with access to the teaching and learning materials used during the sessions. This provided further evidence of appropriate educational challenge, as the team observed teaching staff delivering complex content through synchronous and asynchronous activities. During the live teaching sessions, the team observed detailed discussions and group activities being held in breakout rooms. This included students working together effectively to lead activities and to critically examine the content being taught in the lecture. For example, in the Level 5 teaching observation, students were given time in synchronous activities to examine the evidence base for specific treatment options, including whether to support a treatment option favoured by the academic facilitator. Although this occurred in breakout rooms with small numbers of students, discussion was well managed by students and included an effective critique on different treatment choices, which exceeded the requirements expected of Level 5 study. Discussions with students confirmed their perception that appropriate educational challenge exists across all levels of study.
73. Based on documentation, teaching observations, and meetings with staff and students, the assessment team is confident that the provider has robust processes in place to ensure that its provision has at least the minimum level of rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of its higher education courses in the context of the subject matter and level.

Requirement B1.3.c

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is coherent?

Advice to the OfS

74. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is coherent. This is because the evidence available demonstrates the breadth, depth and incremental learning reasonably expected of higher education courses in the context of the subject matter and the levels of the courses.

Reasoning

75. The team considered the coherence of each higher education course, including the breadth and depth of study and the order in which subjects, concepts, skills and practices are introduced and delivered. To do so, the team reviewed documentation, including course and module specifications, module handbooks and a sample of assignment briefs. The team also met with a range of staff and students.
76. The team's review of course and module handbooks and specifications provides evidence that learning outcomes, teaching content and assessment activities are coherent, subject-focused and progressive, and demonstrate outcomes aligned to relevant study levels. Module specifications and handbooks examined by the team demonstrate development of relevant practitioner skills, evidence of increased complexity across academic levels and stages of study, and increased breadth and depth of content as students progress through modules and academic levels.
77. For example, examination of the modules 'Foundations of Clinical Practice', 'Clinical Practice 1', and 'Clinical Practice 2' clearly illustrate how subjects and skills are being taught in an appropriate order and build on each other throughout the course, and how key concepts are introduced at the appropriate point in the course (see also paragraphs 68, 69 and 150 to 155). There is evidence of a 'spiral curriculum' approach being used, wherein key topics are revisited over time, with each occurrence at a deeper and more complex level that builds on prior knowledge to enhance understanding and skills. Within these three modules, this spiral development can be seen through expectations that students will develop increasing discernment in the application of evidence-based practices for clients presenting with more complex needs.
78. For example, in the 'Foundations of Clinical Practice' module, students are introduced to working with clients, including how different components fit together to help practitioners understand the factors that influence health concerns of clients. At Level 5 in the 'Clinical Practice 1' module, lectures are used to present key skills and knowledge in clinical practice, using case studies to broaden experience of cases and protocols. At Level 6 in the 'Clinical Practice 2' module, the focus is on developing practitioner skills learned and developed primarily in clinic, but additionally through observations of qualified nutritional therapists, feedback from assessed consultations, and assessment designed to consolidate and develop

knowledge and skills. There is also evidence of increased expectation in students' abilities for reflection and independent learning.

79. From reviewing a sample of assessment briefs, the team is confident that assessment of student work is coherent with the learning outcomes and teaching content across modules and courses. Assessment of student work makes effective use of formative and summative approaches, enabling students to develop skills in academic writing, research and clinical practice. The Institute's effective mapping of learning outcomes to assessment activities further demonstrates coherence in their approach to teaching, learning and assessment. For example, in the degree course, the Institute has effectively mapped course learning outcome 'C2' ('critically evaluate professional interactions using feedback, personal reflection, and the observations of others to consolidate clinical judgement and performance') against three specific modules ('Facilitating Behaviour Change', 'Clinical Practice 2' and 'Behavioural Change in Nutrition and Lifestyle Practice').
80. The assessment team is confident that the higher education courses are designed and delivered in ways that demonstrate that subjects and skills are taught in an appropriate order and, where necessary, build on each other throughout the course, and that key concepts are introduced at the appropriate point in the course content. This is evident in the spiral curriculum approach (see paragraphs 77 to 78), and a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of students and includes the necessary breadth and depth of teaching and assessment content for students working towards being practitioners in the field of nutritional therapy, including meeting the needs of industry and the Institute's awarding partner.

Requirement B1.3.d

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is effectively delivered?

Advice to the OfS

81. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is effectively delivered.

Reasoning

82. The team examined key documents including the academic strategic plan, staff CVs, CPD logs, feedback from students, and accreditation reports. The team also observed live and recorded teaching sessions and met with staff and students.
83. Module specifications and handbooks set out the balance of teaching and assessment activities for each module. The Institute uses interactive asynchronous lectures and activities and synchronous online workshops and seminars to embed learning. This is consistent with the definition and methodology of a 'flipped classroom' approach, a teaching model where direct instruction, such as lectures, occurs outside teaching events, often through prerecorded videos or online materials, while teaching sessions are focused on interactive activities such as discussion, problem-solving and group projects. This approach allows students to encounter new material at their own pace, enabling them to focus on applying knowledge and

receiving feedback during dedicated teaching events. Two instructional designers and an online support coordinator are employed to help ensure that staff and students receive a high quality learning experience. It was evident from observing live and recorded teaching sessions that academic staff are confident and experienced in delivering sessions online.

84. The Institute has delivered some online teaching since 2013, with all its higher education provision being delivered this way since the pandemic in 2020. Staff who met the team explained that this form of delivery makes it easier for the student body to study, given that they are often mature students, working in addition to their studies, and living in various parts of the UK and abroad. The ease of access to online materials and teaching sessions was confirmed by students as one of the key reasons for choosing to study at the Institute. Students who met the team confirmed that, overall, they are satisfied with how online teaching is being delivered, and the responsiveness of the Institute to any concerns they have with teaching and learning resources and online teaching. This is evident in student feedback from the Student Voice Committee, as well as evaluation of teaching sessions.
85. One example of the Institute's responsiveness to student feedback is outlined in paragraph 58, whereby the Institute addressed concerns over the VLE. Another example is recent student feedback being actively considered by the Institute regarding the timing of live teaching sessions, which currently take place on Sundays. Students were concerned about fatigue and the inconvenience of long teaching sessions taking place on Sundays, and therefore have expressed a preference for shorter, more frequent sessions. At the time of the visit, the Institute confirmed that it is currently surveying its student body to determine whether shorter, more frequent weekday evening sessions would be preferable.
86. Section B2.2.a covers staff development and training in more detail (see paragraphs 105 to 107). The team is confident that core and self-employed staff possess the teaching qualifications and professional experience to successfully deliver online higher education courses at the Institute. The Academic strategic plan, staff CVs and individual CPD logs provide evidence of staff members who have, or are currently pursuing, relevant teaching and coaching qualifications and Advance HE Fellowship accreditation. Of the CVs seen by the team, nearly a third of contracted and self-employed staff hold recognised teaching qualifications with a further sixth holding fellowship or senior fellowship with Advance HE. In addition, as part of ongoing registration with BANT, all academic staff are required to complete CPD logs detailing what they have done to maintain and promote their professional practice. Across all CVs, staff reflect academic qualifications relevant to the subject discipline at both undergraduate and masters' levels or higher.
87. Visiting lecturers and clinical supervisors play an important role in the delivery of teaching at the Institute, between them being involved in lectures, group work, and practical study. They work closely with core academic staff to deliver higher education courses, including live workshops for certain modules, prerecording of online teaching sessions, and the development of clinic-based skills. CPD logs and CVs reflect their ongoing development, and staff and students who met the team reiterated the quality and balance of teaching across the different delivery methods.
88. Module specifications set out the number of notional hours of study for each module, separated into scheduled and independent hours. The contact hours for each module meet with the awarding partner's recommendations as set out in the curriculum framework

specification. For a 20-credit module, the recommended contact hours at Level 4 are between 34 and 72 hours. These recommendations decrease progressively across academic levels, with 24 to 60 hours recommended at Level 5, and 18 to 48 hours at Level 6. Correspondingly, the expected independent study hours increase progressively across levels, with 128 to 166 hours recommended at Level 4, 140 to 176 hours at Level 5, and 152 to 182 hours at Level 6. The team believes the balance is appropriate for modules across each level of study. For example, the 'Research Project' module has explicit expectations around active student engagement as independent learners and thus provides a clear strategy for students to develop their independent learning.

89. Based on analysis of documentation, teaching observations, and meetings with staff and students, the assessment team is confident that the higher education courses are effectively delivered, and that there is an appropriate balance between directed and independent study.

Requirement B1.3.e

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills?

Advice to the OfS

90. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that each higher education course requires students to develop relevant skills as appropriate to the subject matter. This is because the documentation available demonstrates the knowledge, understanding and other skills reasonably expected of a higher education course, in the context of the subject matter and level of the course.

Reasoning

91. The team examined a range of evidence relating to the development in skills across the courses. These included course and module specifications and handbooks, a sample of assessment briefs, and mapping documentation. In addition, the team had access to the VLE, carried out observations of teaching sessions, and held meetings with a range of staff and students.
92. A review of module specifications and handbooks, and assessment briefs, found evidence of appropriate learning outcomes consistent with subject content and academic level, including the required application to professional practice. Additionally, information is provided on teaching and learning activities alongside skills development and assessment. The module handbooks and specifications show clear progression across academic levels of relevant subject-related skills and industry and employability skills (see also paragraphs 68, 69, 77 and 150 to 155). The team saw evidence in module documentation of appropriate learning outcomes across academic levels, relevant teaching content and assessment activities, and a clear expectation of increased complexity in skills being taught and acquired by students.
93. Paragraph 68 details knowledge and skills development across three modules on the degree course. Using the examples of the 'Clinical Practice 1' and 'Clinical Practice 2' modules at

Levels 5 and 6, respectively, the module handbooks demonstrate the importance of developing skills in clinical practice and developing students as nutritional therapists. For example, the description of 'Clinical Practice 1' begins with the statement that the module 'acts as a gatekeeper to progressing to live clinical practice in Level 6'. In addition, the module coordinators for the Level 5 module seek to provide a safe and supportive space for students to experience and receive formative feedback on clinical consultation skills through role play. This approach enables students to strengthen personal and practitioner identity resulting from peer and supervisor feedback, including feedback on the leadership necessary for future autonomous clinical practice.

94. The skills development in the 'Clinical Practice 1' module is also focused on information literacy, research and evaluation, and reflection. In comparison, 'Clinical Practice 2' describes the core purpose of the module as demonstrating compliance with the nutritional therapy national occupational standards for acceptance on to the professional register of nutritional therapists on graduation. As well as requiring students to integrate learning from preceding modules, one of the key objectives of this module is an expectation that students will consolidate and advance skills learned in the 'Clinical Practice 1' module. For example, communication is added to the three skills development areas initially discussed in the 'Clinical Practice 1' module: those of information literacy, research and evaluation, and reflection. With each of these skills, the complexity of outcomes clearly increases.
95. As well as the requirement for students to develop knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject matter and level, module documentation and assessment briefs illustrate how they are required to develop other relevant skills including cognitive skills, practical skills and transferable skills. The team saw evidence of how the Institute had carefully mapped course learning outcomes, encompassing cognitive skills, practical skills and professional competencies, across modules for each higher education course. For example, students are required to develop a sound understanding of the physiological processes of drug absorption, transport, detoxification and elimination, which is specifically targeted to content in two modules at Levels 4 and 5 ('Nutrition and Lifestyle: Modulation of Neuroendocrine Function' and 'Diagnosis and Treatment in Nutrition and Lifestyle Practice'), respectively. These documents provide assurance that all learning outcomes are adequately addressed across modules and courses. Further evidence of this can be found in the requirements of the assessment briefs.
96. The Institute provided evidence that its higher education courses have been closely mapped to relevant national occupational standards set out by the NTEC and overseen by the CNHC as the sector regulator and the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (see also paragraphs 21 to 24). This helps to ensure that students are being taught the skills necessary to practice as nutritional therapists.
97. The team saw evidence in module handbooks and specifications and in discussions with staff and students that module learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment content and activities reflect, where appropriate, the five principles outlined in the awarding partner's curriculum framework specification (see also paragraphs 49 and 70). Of relevance are principles 2 and 4 which refer, respectively, to an agile curriculum that is informed by relevant developments, innovations and professional practices in its subject areas, and to a curriculum that sufficiently addresses needs with a global workforce. Level 5 and Level 6 modules, for example 'Functional Nutrition 2' and 'Behaviour Change in Nutritional and Lifestyle Practice',

include a focus on critically analysing current information in the field of nutritional therapy to provide informed and evidence-based practices. In addition, three modules include a specific focus on students 'being able to work in a range of environments, responding positively to new situations by being aware, flexible, adaptable and realistic in their expectations'. The relevant modules are 'Clinical Practice 1', 'Clinical Practice 2' and 'Models of Nutrition and Lifestyle Practice'.

98. Based on analysis of the documentation, teaching observations, and meetings with staff and students, the assessment team is confident that the Institute ensures that each higher education course requires students to develop relevant skills as appropriate to its subject matter.

B1 conclusions

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B1 from the date of registration?

99. The assessment team considers that, overall, the Institute has credible plans to ensure, if registered, students on each higher education course would receive a high quality academic experience.
100. Documentation provided by the Institute and meetings with staff, students and external stakeholders assured the team that the provider has processes in place to ensure that courses remain up to date, provide sufficient educational challenge, are coherent and effectively delivered, and require students to develop relevant skills in the context of its student cohort.
101. The team considers that the courses currently offered by the Institute are up to date and that the provider has robust processes to ensure that they remain so, including feedback from students, external examiners and its awarding partner. The team is confident that the Institute will continue to listen and respond to this feedback. The Institute clearly understands its current student body and provides a curriculum which is educationally challenging, coherent, delivered effectively, and requires students to develop relevant skills.
102. The team noted that the requirement of condition B1 is expressed as a principle that can be satisfied in different ways. The team is of the view that the evidence set out above is sufficient for it to make an overall view in respect of initial condition B1. Considering its findings at B1.3.a, B1.3.b, B1.3.c, B1.3.d and B1.3.e, and the reasoning they contained, the assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure its students will receive a high quality academic experience.

Condition B2: Resources, support, and student engagement

Requirement B2.2.a (resources)

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans for how each cohort of students would receive resources which are sufficient for the purposes of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education?**

Advice to the OfS

103. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans for how each cohort of students will receive resources that are sufficient for ensuring a high quality academic experience, and for those students to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

104. The team examined a range of evidence, including course and module handbooks and specifications, module evaluations and audits, external examiners' reports, a staff list, an organisational chart, a sample of staff CVs and job descriptions, and feedback from students. The team had access to the VLE throughout the assessment process, and met with students and a range of academic and support staff.
105. The team found substantial evidence that both contracted and self-employed staff at the Institute are appropriately qualified (see also paragraph 60). Evidence from CVs for staff and visiting lecturers, and from CPD logs completed as part of the ongoing registration with the BANT, demonstrates that staff have undergone a range of activities focused on maintaining and promoting their professional practice. In addition, many staff members remain in employment in clinical practice and continue to hold roles relevant to industry and professional bodies. For example, the Dean's role includes leadership and representation at the Nutritional Therapy Training Providers Forum, active engagement in accreditation, external examining, and providing expert subject advice to professional and educational bodies. Of the two visiting lecturers who the team met at the visit, both had extensive experience in designing and delivering courses in nutritional therapy.
106. The Institute has comprehensive policies and practices in place to support the training and development of its workforce including academic team meetings, peer observation, a strategic priorities matrix (including staff development activities), and a policy for staff training and development. The policy for staff development and training confirms the Institute's commitment to staff development and provides a clear framework for identifying training needs including regular manager review, identification of needs from point of induction, and through supervision. Evidence from completed forms shows how peer review feeds into the process of staff development through the comprehensive feedback provided to staff. The peer observation process also includes live sessions run by visiting lecturers being observed at the time by a module coordinator or the recording reviewed afterwards. In addition, asynchronous lectures produced by visiting lecturers are viewed by module coordinators for quality control

purposes after creation. The Institute promotes internal and external courses and sessions to train its staff. Examples include online workshops focusing on irritable bowel syndrome, the role of fibre, dietary diversity and functional testing, a one day conference with BioCare on Metabolic resilience and navigating weight and energy challenges in a changing clinical landscape, and an online workshop at the Institute focused on exploring the optimality of the ketogenic diet.

107. As previously stated, examples of the Institute's supportive staff development practices are seen across the CVs and CPD logs and include staff registering to study where necessary on courses such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PG CertHE) and other qualifications intended to enhance their teaching knowledge and skills. The Institute has committed to ensuring that all academic staff obtain relevant teaching qualifications such as the PG CertHE or Advance HE fellowship, and that staff are developed to enable them to have the required capability and competence to fulfil their role and to enhance their ability to engage in research and scholarly activities that inform teaching. The strategic priorities matrix for academic year 2025-26 shows the Institute's investment in staff development activities including funding two to three persons per year to complete the PG CertHE, commitment to fellowship or senior fellowship with Advance HE, a commitment to ensure that peer review and supervision were in place for all staff from April 2026, and strategic selection of staff to attend and participate in relevant conferences and internal lunch and learn sessions. The matrix provides evidence of four module coordinators having completed their PG CertHE with one still in study, and four module coordinators in discussion with Advance HE regarding fellowship. Therefore, the team is confident that the evidence from documentation and meetings at the visit reflects a group of staff that remains focused on professional development and current industry practices through various CPD activities.
108. The team considers that the Institute has a sufficient number of employed and contracted staff to effectively deliver their provision in practice. Each module has an identified module coordinator with the necessary knowledge and skills expertise to deliver a quality learning experience for students. CVs have been submitted for staff acting as clinic supervisors to retain the focus on application of learning to practice. In addition, the BAC inspection review and report (July 2025) judged that 'staff have an understanding of the specific requirements of online, distance and blended learning' and that 'academic staff receive effective training and support to ensure the successful delivery of online and distance learning that meets the needs and interests of students'. Finally, a review of student feedback did not raise any issues to do with staffing levels.
109. The Institute makes effective use of teaching and learning resources. For example, it makes widespread use of case studies to enhance the application of subject material to practical settings, as well as for assessment purposes in modules including 'Clinical Practice 2', and 'Modulation of Detoxification and Gastrointestinal Function'. An example of this was seen during one of the live teaching observations in which detailed information was supplied to students on a complex client profile that was being used to examine treatment interventions. Through the use of appropriate online learning and evaluation tools, students were encouraged to comment on and develop care plans for possible intervention strategies that were then discussed fully with the academic facilitator. This case study approach to teaching, learning and assessment supports the application of theory to practice and enhances student learning. Another example of the effective use of teaching resources to promote a high quality academic experience is the preparation of students for employability, in particular the

opportunity to assess 'live' clients in a clinical practice setting. When working with clients, students have access to useful resources, such as the symptom tracking tool, which assists them in providing a comprehensive client assessment by promoting greater insight into client needs and directing consideration to potential future interventions.

110. An example of a significant enhancement to teaching and learning resources is the improvement in the VLE following criticism raised at the Student Voice Committee in 2024 and 2025, to do with accessibility and consistency of module information and resources. This is discussed more fully in paragraph 58. Minutes of the Student Voice Committee and feedback from students who met the team confirm the significant improvements made to the VLE.
111. As part of the assessment process, the team was given access to the VLE and found it to contain a considerable amount of useful information to do with the course, as well as the necessary teaching and learning resources. These resources include information relating to induction, information about academic support, and a range of study skills guidance, for example on planning, structuring and academic writing and notes on how to write in a concise manner and evaluate research and sharpen critical thinking skills. On the VLE, students can easily access materials relating to modules, including comprehensive online module resources and forums. As courses are validated by the University of Portsmouth, students can access the university's resources, which include relevant journals and textbooks from their online library. Students are informed of these resources and how to access them in the Student Handbook under the section on 'Supporting your learning'.
112. There has been criticism during the last two academic years, raised through the Student Voice Committee, of teaching resources some students perceive as out of date. Criticism has tended to be directed towards key reading resources, but also podcasts, especially those discussing treatment options during the pandemic. Senior and academic staff who met the team confirmed that, although certain reading resources might appear dated, they remain valuable sources for students. Some of the students who met the team also raised concerns about the currency of some of the teaching materials used on their course. While staff who met the team stated that attempts have been made by module teams to share their rationale with students for using particular resources, with discussion particularly focused on resources relating to the pandemic, academic staff accepted that more work was required to successfully communicate the continued relevance of these resources to students. The team is confident that the Institute has listened to the concerns of students and, where appropriate, are continuing to implement the necessary changes to improve the learning experience for students. This is evidenced in the validated collaborative partner quality priority plan that places ownership of oversight to refresh course content with the Head of Undergraduate Courses, recognising it as an ongoing action with a completion date of September 2026. Further evidence of the Institute's processes for keeping its courses up to date can be found in section B1.3.a.
113. Based on analysis of documentation, access to the VLE, observation of teaching sessions, and discussions with staff and students, the team is confident that resources are sufficient for students to receive a high quality academic experience and to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Requirement B2.2.a (support)

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans for how each cohort of students would receive support which is sufficient for the purposes of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education?**

Advice to the OfS

114. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans for how each cohort of students will receive support that is sufficient for ensuring a high quality academic experience, and for those students to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

115. The team examined a range of evidence, including a sample of staff CVs and job descriptions, feedback from students, student handbooks, a sample of assessment briefs, module evaluation reports, and minutes of the Course Board of Study. The team had access to the VLE throughout the assessment process, and met with students and a range of academic and support staff.
116. The Institute offers an impressive range of support to students. Direct, personalised support is available from a dedicated academic support team with considerable experience of supporting students at other providers. The academic support team offers a range of services to students including:
- a link with the awarding partner's library in terms of student access to resources
 - study skills support, including online study support
 - information about potential academic misconduct
 - supporting students with additional needs or signposting them to other types of support where appropriate.
117. Although the Institute employs only two part-time members of staff in the academic support team for over 400 students, their expertise and ways of working have ensured that students receive a high level of support. This includes effective communication and handovers to ensure that students' requests are dealt with efficiently, usually within 24 hours. Feedback from Student Voice Committee meetings consistently praises the academic support services. Examples of the positive feedback include comments highlighting the responsiveness, efficiency, flexibility, professionalism, and helpfulness of the support team. While doing everything it can to help students directly, the support team is adept at recognising the limitations of their role within a relatively small organisation, and the need to make use of the university's student support services when required. While many students have higher education qualifications or experience as practitioners in the field of nutrition, the vast majority register as mature students, many of whom need some level of academic support on their

return to formal education. Students are made aware of the support available through the VLE, at induction, and in student handbooks. These handbooks also make specific reference to the joint resource that students have access to through the Institute and the university.

118. The Institute's policy for academic support commits to working to create and sustain a community of learners and treating people with dignity and respect, and upholding the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. This way of working is reflected through feedback from Student Voice Committee meetings and is demonstrated in the report on academic support provision for academic year 2024-25. The report outlines additional examples of personalised support including one-to-one tutorials, webinars, wellbeing resources, resit intervention, and support for students to engage with VLE resources, for example in facilitating development of academic skills. In addition, students who met the team talked about initiatives, referenced in the academic support report, that had been implemented during the academic year 2025-26. This included a resource bank of bite-sized module video content which had been requested by students.
119. Additionally, written and video resources are available to students on the VLE providing additional support for learning. Among the topics covered are: information relating to study skills including academic writing, how to write concisely, time management, using plagiarism detection software (Turnitin), paraphrasing, referencing, and critique and critical thinking. In addition, students have access to recordings of previous teaching sessions, access to course cohort pages where students can access forums, teaching timetables and assessment schedules on the learner hub portal, and relevant announcements pertaining to their studies. Throughout the assessment process, the team had comprehensive access to relevant sections of the VLE and can confirm that these resources are helpful and clearly presented.
120. Information is available to students who are diagnosed with or believe they have additional learning needs, specifically in relation to resources to support learning and, where necessary, the process for how to get assessed for dyslexia. All students can request one-to-one sessions with the academic support team using the academic support self-referral form. Those with specific learning difficulties are provided with more detailed and strategic study planning during one-to-one sessions. There is no limit on the number of sessions a student can request, but there are priority criteria leading up to assessment deadlines. The academic support team also runs drop-in sessions for students with specific learning difficulties. Academic support staff who met the team confirmed their experience in working with such students but recognised that, in a small institution, there is often a need to signpost students where appropriate to specialist support to meet their specific learning needs, including support available from the awarding partner.
121. From student feedback including minutes and action logs of the Student Voice Committee, module evaluations, and discussions at Course Board of Study meetings, the team recognises the positive contribution that academic support brings to the student experience. Feedback from students includes statements about how helpful, responsive, supportive and empathetic staff are. This was reiterated by students who met the team. Academic and support staff who met the team confirmed the close working relationship between module coordinators and academic support staff to support students when necessary, for example when students have specific learning needs or are facing challenges with their assessments. In addition, module coordinators schedule open access time each week for students to use as

and when required. This practice was praised by students who met the team, especially during assessment periods.

122. The Institute provides the support needed to underpin digital learning and teaching. It has been providing courses online since 2013 and has therefore built up a considerable level of knowledge and experience in what works well for this method of delivery. This is supplemented by employing two instructional designers and an online support coordinator to oversee developments to the VLE, renew learning resources in good time, and respond promptly to feedback from students and industry. There are multiple ways that academic staff are able to develop and evaluate their online teaching skills including probation reviews, peer observation, and the identification of development needs through supervision (see also paragraph 106). For example, evidence from two completed peer review forms shows that peer reviewers noted evidence of inclusive and student-centred approaches to teaching, and that lecturers used a range of appropriate online tools, including PowerPoint slides and communication tools such as Menti, to promote learning.
123. While the Institute does not have a formal careers support team, there is teaching and support available to promote employability and career choices. Some students are already practitioners, either directly as nutritionists or in related fields, and study at the Institute to add new skills or further their existing career. Many academic staff are, or have been, practitioners and are therefore able to offer advice to students about careers, as well as providing greater insight for students on their preferred direction of travel as nutritional therapists. In addition, students are being trained to become practitioners and to meet industry standards, and therefore are required to study and pass clinical practice modules to meet academic and professional requirements. This level of ongoing support from current practitioners, in terms of applying learning to practice, increases the likelihood of students succeeding beyond higher education. For example, this is reflected in the first learning outcome of the 'Clinical Practice 2' module at Level 6, which requires students 'to demonstrate and model professional behaviours when working with clients, clinical tutors, other care providers, colleagues and staff'. Students also study a 'Business and Career Planning' module in the final year of the BSc course, as well as having access to an industry hub on the VLE, which includes information about potential future product and service providers and employers.
124. The team is satisfied that the Institute effectively deploys assistance to support students to understand and avoid academic misconduct (see also paragraphs 156 to 158). The Institute uses plagiarism detection software to discourage and detect academic misconduct, and tutors encourage students to use this as a formative tool prior to assessment submissions. Students are additionally required to confirm stipulations around academic integrity and non-use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) with the submission of each assignment. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that students are informed about academic integrity and misconduct, and that they have access to the academic misconduct practices and policies on the VLE and in course handbooks. The team was informed that there is a specific area on the VLE in the study skills section that includes guidance on the use of generative AI. Students who met the team confirmed their awareness of the academic integrity and misconduct policy and where to find it on the VLE. Where misconduct is suspected, the marking process is paused and, if the concern is upheld, the matter is referred to the Academic Integrity Panel for further consideration. A range of sanctions are available, and these are clearly outlined in the regulations handbook. The assessment team was therefore satisfied that appropriate

mechanisms are in place to detect and manage academic misconduct, and that the sanctions are clearly communicated to students.

Requirement B2.2.b

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans for how it would ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education?**

Advice to the OfS

125. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans for how it would ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and for the purpose of ensuring that those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

126. The team reviewed a range of documents and evidence including teaching observations, the policy for student engagement, student surveys, minutes and action logs of Student Voice Committee and Course Board of Study meetings, governance structure, accreditation reports, and the annual report for academic support. The team also met with students.
127. Despite the student body studying online and being situated across the UK and worldwide, the Institute succeeds in engaging effectively with each cohort of students. The Institute's policy for student engagement commits to ensuring that opportunities exist for students to present their views, that they are listened to, and that their feedback is discussed and considered. This commitment applies across learning and teaching, course development and review, learning and support services, course and module administration, and student support and guidance.
128. The team saw a substantial amount of evidence that supports the Institute's engagement with students in practice, both formally and informally, notably the minutes and action plans arising from meetings of the Student Voice Committee. The committee meets twice a year, with minutes and action logs of meetings demonstrating that a range of issues are discussed, actioned where appropriate, and outcomes fed back to the group at the next meeting (see also paragraph 61). It is clear from the action plans that the Institute is taking proactive action to respond to student feedback. For example, following the meeting of the committee in November 2025, the resulting action log reported that students would welcome weekly study planners for each module. The evidence shows that the Institute took prompt action to insert a study planner into each module handbook, which sets out tasks and recommended reading ahead of each live teaching session. The Institute is now planning to introduce online web-based handbooks from September 2026, with the aim of improving planner navigation for students. The action logs are effective in capturing ongoing and completed actions and serve

as a useful tracking tool when assessing engagement with students. The team saw several other examples of the Institute responding promptly and effectively to student feedback, for example the development of the VLE and consideration of proposals to change when live sessions are delivered (see also paragraphs 58 and 85). This provides evidence of students participating in activities to develop their courses and the ways in which they are delivered.

129. While the Institute's terms of reference for its various committees show that student representatives are not formal members of other committees at the Institute, there is the capacity for them to opt in to certain committees as and when appropriate. Given that feedback from the Student Voice Committee is reported to, and discussed at, meetings of the Course Board of Study, which in turn reports to the Education Committee and finally the Board of Trustees, the team is assured that the student voice is sufficiently listened to, and evidence shows that it has led to changes to the development of courses and the way they are delivered.
130. Student feedback is captured by other means including surveys. Although limited evidence has been provided on end-of-module evaluations, the evaluations provided demonstrate that students can rate the quality of modules and provide qualitative feedback. A review of the minutes of Student Voice Committee meetings shows that students have frequently commented on lack of consistency in how modules are presented on the VLE, for example to do with difficulties in locating information, folders not being labelled clearly, and ensuring that online links work consistently. The assessment team were able to see from the resulting student voice report and action logs that this feedback is valued and actioned. Actions taken as a result of student feedback form a substantive agenda item within Course Board of Study meetings. For example, minutes of the Course Board of Study meeting in May 2024 show that the academic team had standardised labelling on the VLE and updated lecture recordings.
131. The Institute provides training for students who take on the role of student representative. New representatives attend live online training to induct them into the role. The session is recorded for those unable to attend and for students to revisit as desired. The training covers the purpose of the role, what student representatives are expected to do, and guidelines for gathering student feedback and for completing the required paperwork. Representatives are given guidance on how to present feedback at Student Voice Committee meetings, and guidelines on professional conduct at meetings. Each full- and part-time course has a student representative. Students who met the team confirmed that the student representative system works well and that students serve as representatives for one year and then step back from the role.
132. Because of the nature of online provision, the team explored how connected students feel as peer communities of learners, particularly as this point was raised at a meeting of the Student Voice Committee in 2025. In particular, it stated in the minutes of one meeting that 'some students who access online, and specifically those who have changed their study pathways, report a sense of isolation and disconnect with their peers'. Students who met the team spoke positively about study groups that they had set up, for example through WhatsApp, that resulted in their feeling less isolated and more connected to their peers. These study groups also provide a useful vehicle for them to discuss course-related material and other information related to their studies. The importance placed on these groups was emphasised, with one

overseas student reporting that they put aside the inconvenience of time zones to allow them to regularly meet with other students.

133. In the context of the Institute's provision and the nature of its student body, the team is confident that it has adequate mechanisms in place to engage with students and to seek and respond to student feedback. Therefore, the team is confident that credible plans exist for ensuring effective engagement with each cohort of students, sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students and ensuring that those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

B2 conclusions

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B2 from the date of registration?

134. The assessment team's view is that, overall, the Institute has credible plans to enable it, if registered, to comply with the requirements of condition B2 in relation to resources, support and student engagement.
135. The Institute's resources are adequate for its online provision, with evidence seen and heard by the team of significant improvements to the VLE for students. The Institute has appropriate staffing levels and, alongside core academic staff, it effectively deploys visiting lecturers to deliver its courses.
136. One of the Institute's strengths is the support it provides to students and the team heard several examples of this in practice. Student engagement is effective, with students having sufficient opportunities to provide feedback to the Institute, most notably via the Student Voice Committee, and the Institute is very responsive in dealing with any issues raised by students and student representatives.
137. Considering its findings at B2.2.a, B2.2.b and B2.2.c, and the reasoning contained therein, the team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure high quality resources and support, and effective student engagement.

Condition B4: Assessment and awards

Requirement B4.2.a

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is assessed effectively?

Advice to the OfS

138. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that students are assessed effectively. This is because the skills that the Institute assesses are relevant to the awards provided; the rigour and stretch of the assessments are appropriate to the level of the courses and the intellectual challenge for students builds as they progress through each course; and assessments are designed in a way that aims to minimise academic misconduct and facilitates detection of such misconduct where it occurs.

Reasoning

139. In assessing condition B4.2.a, the team reviewed a range of evidence including academic regulations, quality handbook, marking rubrics, samples of student work, and assessment briefs and handbooks for each module. The team met with students, academic staff and external examiners.
140. According to the Institute's regulations, each higher education course operates under the University of Portsmouth's specific partner regulations 'Examination and Assessment Regulations in Partnership with The Institute for Optimum Nutrition'. This being the case, the responsibility for the setting and implementation of the assessment regulations and policies is shared between the Institute and the awarding partner. The awarding partner has a 'Connected Curriculum', which is a set of principles and guidance for the design, development, teaching and assessment of courses. It is stated in the 'Connected Curriculum' that there is no requirement for collaborative courses to comply with the principles, although it is encouraged. Academic staff who met the team stated that the Institute has aligned with the 'Connected Curriculum' but has also negotiated adjustments. For example, it has deviated from the recommended word count, to ensure equivalence and appropriateness across its own provision for specific word count requirements per credit level. The team considered that this further demonstrated the shared responsibility for the oversight and implementation of assessment policy and practice.
141. The team found that module handbooks provide students with clear information regarding summative assessment requirements, submission deadlines and available formative opportunities. Separate summative assessment briefs are provided for each module, setting out assessment requirements and grading criteria through module-specific marking rubrics. The team confirmed this by reviewing a sample of summative assessment briefs available to students on the VLE.
142. The team found that the approach to formative assessment varies across modules. Some module handbooks refer students to separate formative assessment briefs, while others

identify formative assessment opportunities without providing details such as submission dates. A review of module pages on the VLE confirmed that separate formative assessment briefs are provided for Level 4 and Level 5 modules and include clear submission deadlines. However, the team found that separate formative assessment briefs are not routinely provided for Level 6 modules, including those delivered as part of the Graduate Diploma. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that formative assessment is not required to take the form of a written submission, although modules are expected to include formative activities aligned to the summative assessment. Students who met the team confirmed that the Graduate Diploma does not include formalised formative assessment opportunities, which they attributed to the intensive nature of the course and the volume of summative assessment within compressed delivery timescales. Students reported, however, that the sequential design of case study assessments enabled feedback from earlier submissions to be applied to subsequent assessments, and considered this feedback to be valuable in supporting their learning. Students also reported that academic staff are accessible and responsive to requests for support and clarification where required.

143. The team initially remained unclear as to why Level 4 and Level 5 modules include explicit formative assessment briefs, whereas Level 6 modules on both the BSc and Graduate Diploma do not. This was explored further during discussions with the senior leadership team. Senior staff who met the team explained that formative assessment opportunities are embedded in the delivery of Level 6 modules, although they are not necessarily identified or documented in the same way as those at Levels 4 and 5. The Head of Undergraduate Courses provided an overview of formative and summative assessment opportunities across each level of the BSc and Graduate Diploma courses. The team found that, at Level 6 of the BSc and Graduate Diploma courses, formative opportunities are primarily delivered through live workshop activities and in-class feedback rather than through formal submission points. Because of the evidence reviewed and discussions held during the visit, the team was satisfied that students are provided with formative opportunities across all modules, thus ensuring that they are assessed effectively.
144. The team observed that in the CertHE course, all six 20-credit modules are assessed via coursework. The team was initially concerned with the volume of coursework-based submissions, especially given the profession of a nutritional therapist and the importance of communication skills, and was concerned there might be some risk to effective assessment specifically related to the testing of relevant skills. Academic staff who met the team explained that the rationale for using coursework-based assessment rather than 'live', in-person assessments is linked to the courses being marketed as offering flexibility. Because of this, requiring live assessments would reduce that flexibility for the students the Institute typically attracts.
145. However, the assessment strategy does demonstrate appropriate variation in format, for example with the inclusion of a recorded 20-minute oral presentation for the 'Principles of Functional Nutrition' module. In addition, the 'Foundations of Clinical Practice' module requires completion of a portfolio designed to evidence students' ability to 'demonstrate clinical analysis skills, effective consultation delivery and ability to reflect on your clinic experience'. In this portfolio, students must complete a role play client scenario and upload the recorded session. Although students do not receive a grade for this component (a 0 per cent weighted pass/fail competency assessment), they are required to pass the assessment to pass the module. Therefore, the team is satisfied that the variety of coursework-based

assessments, which incorporated a pass/fail video submission, mitigates the risk and considers that this approach aligns with condition B4.2.a, as assessment methods are designed to test relevant skills consistent with the Level 4 award.

146. Similarly, for the BSc course, all modules at Level 5 are assessed through coursework submissions. However, the assessment strategy again demonstrates variation in assessment type, including case-based questions, critique of a video consultation, reflections and development plans, essay and evaluations. In the 'Coaching' module, students are required to record a 20-minute video of a coaching session, before reflecting and creating a development plan. While students do not receive a grade for the coaching session video itself (a 0 per cent weighted pass/fail competency assessment), students must pass this assessment to pass the module. Likewise, in the 'Clinical Practice 1' module, students must submit a video-recorded nutritional consultation role play. This is also assessed as a 0 per cent weighted pass/fail competency assessment against the national occupational standards. Although students do not receive a grade for this component, successful completion is required for progression to external client consultations in the training clinic, as it functions as a benchmark assessment. This is accompanied by a case study write-up weighted at 100 per cent of the module mark. Given that the relevant skills of a nutritional therapist, such as communication and rapport with a client, are assessed through mandatory competency based pass/fail components, the team is satisfied that this approach aligns with condition B4.2(a), as assessment methods are designed to test relevant skills consistent with the level of award.
147. At Level 6 of the BSc course, recorded PowerPoint presentations, business plans, critical appraisals, and an autonomous research project are used. This is in addition to the 'Clinical Practice 2' module, in which the pass/fail 0 per cent weighted assessment is marked against the national occupational standards and sees students work with real clients in the training clinic. Similarly, for the Graduate Diploma, students are assessed on their ability to evaluate a case study alongside reflections and critique of a video consultation. For those progressing to become a nutritional therapist after the diploma, the 'Clinical Practice 2' module is required as outlined on the BSc course. The team considers that this approach aligns with condition B4.2.a, as assessment methods are designed to test relevant skills.
148. To further triangulate whether the assessments are testing relevant skills and providing appropriate stretch and rigour, a sample of student work was reviewed. The team saw evidence that students reflect on, and evaluate, the effectiveness of their coaching skills with a client, alongside creating goals in the form of a development plan based on those self-reflections. The team also saw evidence of effective analyses of case studies, with strategies implemented for the client, and business plans developed for students to implement after graduation. The team reviewed a sample of video recordings from the recorded practical consultations and was satisfied that students are assessed effectively, specifically with reference to the testing of relevant skills, and providing stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course. Examples of relevant skills observed by the team included clear and professional communication with clients, as well as the ability to establish rapport and show empathy. These interactions reflected the communication and interpersonal skills required of a nutritional therapist. Furthermore, students obtained a comprehensive client history and assessed the issues identified by the client, before proposing appropriate dietary modifications. This assessment is therefore valid and has the required stretch and rigour to assess the knowledge and practical skills required for competent nutritional therapy practice.

149. To further test whether the Institute's assessment processes provide an appropriate level of stretch and rigour, the team reviewed a sample of assessment briefs, external examiner reports, curriculum mapping documentation, and level and grading descriptors for Levels 4 to 6.
150. The team found that course learning outcomes are appropriately distributed across modules and levels, demonstrating a clear progression in educational challenge and providing stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course. Course learning outcomes are introduced and mapped to Level 4, including the requirement for students to demonstrate understanding of 'the scientific principles, method and knowledge of systems biology', thereby establishing core disciplinary knowledge. Level 5 modules are mapped to the course learning outcomes, requiring increased critical engagement, including the ability to 'critically analyse information, within an evidence informed practice context'. At Level 6, students are required to demonstrate higher-order cognitive skills through outcomes such as 'synthesize knowledge and understanding from all modules of the course within a systems/functional medicine framework', 'design a rigorous ethical research activity, applying critical thinking and independent decision-making', and 'propose an area of research to undertake a focused critical investigation, evaluating the outcomes and making recommendations to practice'.
151. The team considered that these outcomes are appropriately reserved for Level 6 study and provide assurance that students must successfully demonstrate achievement at the appropriate academic level to obtain the BSc (Hons) award. This conclusion is triangulated with the external examiners' reports, in which the external examiners 'agree' that the 'learning outcomes/curriculum is appropriate for a qualification at this level' and that 'the standards set for the assessments are appropriate for a qualification at this level'.
152. The team concluded that the range of assessment methods employed were appropriate to the level of study, and that the requirements of the assessments enabled the module learning outcomes to be met and tested relevant skills and knowledge. This is because assessment requirements at Level 4 focus primarily on knowledge, understanding and explanation. For example, in the 'Nutrition and Lifestyle Modulation of Immune Function' module, students are required to 'describe pathological processes underpinning immune dysfunction' and 'explain the impact of nutrition and lifestyle on immune function and health', which are met through the completion of short answer questions. Similarly, in the module 'Nutrition and Lifestyle Modulation of Detoxification and GI Function', students are required to 'identify pathological processes underpinning detoxification and gastrointestinal systems dysfunction', and 'explain the actions of given dietary and lifestyle approaches on detoxification and gastrointestinal function,' requirements that are met through completing short answer questions. The team considered these module learning outcomes to be consistent with expectations for Level 4 study.
153. At Level 5, assessments require students to engage more critically with evidence and apply their knowledge in practice. For example, in the 'Functional Nutrition 2' module, students are required to 'appraise the breadth and quality of evidence and prioritise for nutrition and lifestyle practice' and 'apply findings from the appraisal and wider reading to nutrition and lifestyle practice'. The specific assessment task requires students to evaluate the efficacy of vitamin D in the modulation of moderate clinical depression, by critically appraising a given paper and engaging with wider reading. In the module 'Diagnosis and Treatment in Nutrition and Lifestyle Practice', students are required to 'apply the principles of nutritional diagnosis to

complex cases to inform treatment approach'. This learning outcome is assessed through a detailed client case study, which contains a comprehensive client history, including the findings from blood tests. Students must answer a range of questions detailed in the assessment brief, such as whether certain supplements would be suitable for the client based on the case history and test results. The team considered that these module learning outcomes demonstrate an appropriate increase in academic challenge and application from Level 4 to Level 5.

154. At Level 6, assessments require students to synthesise, critically evaluate and integrate knowledge from across the course. For example, in the 'Clinical Practice 2' module, students are assessed on their ability to 'synthesise knowledge and understanding from all relevant modules of the course to inform case management, within a functional/integrative/systems framework', and 'critically apply diverse sources of information to inform clinical practice'. This is specifically achieved via the critical appraisal and evaluation of a functional test. Similarly, in the 'Business and Career Planning' module, students are required to 'critically analyse market opportunities and local competition to establish an identified target audience and income streams for a business'. The team considered that these module learning outcomes and accompanying assessments demonstrate an appropriate level of stretch and rigour for Level 6 study.
155. Based on the evidence reviewed, the team concludes that the Institute's assessment strategy provides students with opportunities to demonstrate progressively more complex knowledge, understanding and skills as they advance through their studies. The team therefore considered that the Institute's current delivery of higher education provides evidence of credible arrangements to ensure that students on current courses are assessed effectively, with specific reference to providing stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course, and the testing of relevant skills.
156. The team is satisfied that the Institute has processes in place to minimise the opportunities for academic misconduct. The Institute uses plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) to discourage and detect academic misconduct, and tutors encourage students to use this as a formative tool prior to assessment submissions. Students are additionally required to confirm stipulations around academic integrity and non-use of generative AI with the submission of each assignment. All summative work is submitted through Turnitin, where the similarity score is used as a detection method, alongside academic judgement.
157. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that students are informed about academic integrity and misconduct, and that they have access to the academic misconduct policies. The policies are easily accessible on the VLE as well as being hyperlinked from the course handbooks. The team was informed that a specific area on the VLE in the study skills section includes guidance on the use of generative AI. Students who met the team confirmed their awareness of the academic integrity and misconduct policy and where to find it on the VLE.
158. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that assessment markers receive training on the identification of academic misconduct. Where misconduct is suspected, the marking process is paused and the case is referred to the module coordinator for initial review. If the concern is upheld, the matter is referred to the Academic Integrity Panel for further consideration. A range of sanctions are available, and these are clearly outlined in the regulations handbook. The team was therefore satisfied that appropriate mechanisms are in place for detecting and

managing of academic misconduct, and that the sanctions are clearly communicated to students.

159. Regarding assessments being designed in a way that minimises the opportunities for academic misconduct, the team identified a potential risk around the opportunity for academic misconduct (plagiarism, collusion, the use of generative AI), as many assessments are coursework-based. However, the range of coursework assessments used minimises the opportunity for such misconduct, including clinical focused scenarios, critique of a video recording, and personal reflections and evaluations of the student's own coaching practice with a client.
160. Furthermore, academic staff who met the team stated that module coordinators are trying to move to more authentic assessments, such as a recorded oral presentation with voiceover slides, to reduce further the potential use of generative AI. This is evidenced in the module 'Principles of Functional Nutrition', where the assessment has changed from an essay to a recorded 20-minute oral presentation. To further support this judgement, students are required to submit a portfolio at each level of the BSc course, which has a pass/fail element of a role play or live consultation. For the Graduate Diploma, students are required to critique a video, evaluate clinical case studies, and offer a reflection on their progress within the modules, again reducing the opportunities for academic misconduct. Therefore, the assessment team is satisfied that the Institute is designing assessments that minimise the opportunities for academic misconduct.

Requirement B4.2.b

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course assessment is valid and reliable?

Advice to the OfS

161. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that each higher education course assessment is valid and reliable. This is because the assessment processes (including assessment design, marking standardisation, moderation and external examining) are robust and credible for each higher education course. This being the case, assessments take place in a manner which is consistent between students and in a way that results in students demonstrating knowledge and skills as intended by the design of the assessment.

Reasoning

162. The team reviewed a sample of assessment briefs and student work for each course, and met with students, academic staff and external examiners.
163. The team is satisfied that assessments are valid, and that in them students demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in the way intended by the design of the assessment (see also paragraphs 150 to 155). The sample of assessment briefs included assessments aligned with the practice of nutritional therapy in the training clinic, whereby students need to record a 'satisfactory' grading at least three times per academic year for each competency

according to the assessment criteria. These competencies are mapped to those set out by the CNHC, and therefore assessments are authentic and valid because they appropriately test the intended learning outcomes. Case-based scenarios in the Clinical Practice modules further support the validity of assessment, whereby students demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in the way intended by the design of the assessment. Furthermore, senior staff who met the team confirmed that the BANT review and observe the Institute every three years for reaccreditation, thus further ensuring that assessments remain valid.

164. Assessment briefs must be signed and submitted to the awarding partner for scrutiny. Any changes to module assessments must be discussed with the Level lead at the Institute and approved by the Dean, prior to submission to the awarding partner. This should enable congruence with the module learning outcomes, and with the relevant course specification. On review of the module handbooks and assessment briefs, the team noted some discrepancies between the two documents in the wording of the learning outcomes. When the team viewed the live documents on the VLE, for two of the incidences the disparity had been rectified. However, minor variations in wording remained for one module. The team noted that in the handbook provided for the 'Clinical Practice 2' module, the assessment weightings totalled 150 per cent. This was cross-checked with the module specification, where the assessment weighting correctly totalled 100 per cent. It was confirmed at the visit that modules are signed off twice per academic year by the Head of Undergraduate Courses. Therefore, the team is satisfied that these errors have either been rectified in the live documentation, as seen on the VLE, or remain minor and therefore do not pose a risk to the validity of the assessments. To be sure, the Institute might consider scrutinising all learning outcomes and weighing of assessments on the respective assessment briefs, module handbooks, and module specifications to ensure they are consistent.
165. To ensure reliability of assessments, the Institute conducts marking standardisation at the start of the summative marking process. This is led by the module coordinator and involves all markers on the assessment, to ensure a consistent approach to grading and the provision of feedback. Each marker is provided with one script to mark ahead of an online standardisation meeting, which is used to discuss differences in approach to grading and feedback style so that all markers can begin marking with a clear understanding of the standards required.
166. During discussions at the visit, the team queried the use of a single script for standardisation purposes. Academic staff who met the team stated that, given the experience of the marking team, one script was considered sufficient. Staff explained that module coordinators work closely with markers throughout the process and, where new markers are involved, the module coordinator moderates the first three marked scripts to ensure alignment with expected standards and academic level. This was confirmed in the meeting with visiting lecturers and clinical supervisors who stated that, for each module, there is a live session where the assignment is discussed, including requirements, grading and timeline for return of work. They also confirmed that they work closely with the module coordinator and that their first few scripts are moderated when they are new to the module.
167. The team sought clarification regarding attendance at standardisation meetings and whether participation by all markers was mandatory. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that there are occasions where markers are unable to attend. The team considered that non-attendance presented a potential risk to consistency and reliability, as absent markers would not contribute to, or benefit from, discussions informing the agreed standardised approach. In

response, staff stated that such instances occur infrequently and that, where a marker has not attended, that person has access to the recording of the meeting. In addition, the module coordinator undertakes early moderation of the first three scripts marked by that person to ensure consistency. It was pointed out that, where concerns remain, the module coordinator re-marks the work. On this basis, the team was satisfied that the Institute has appropriate processes in place to support reliability and consistency in marking.

168. Academic staff undertake a comprehensive induction and onboarding programme to ensure that they understand their role and are fully informed about academic systems and processes. Training for assessment markers takes place twice annually and staff have access to examples of previously marked scripts to refer to. Visiting lecturers who met the team confirmed that they had undertaken a sufficient amount of training to enable them to confidently mark assessments. In addition, module-specific marking guidelines are provided to markers, and examples were requested and reviewed by the team during the visit. Having considered the evidence provided and discussed it with relevant staff members, the team is satisfied that the guidance supports consistency and standardisation in marking practices.
169. Moderation is required for all summative assessments, and the Institute typically adopts a sampled second marking approach. A selection of scripts, including the top, middle and bottom ones alongside any borderline or fail scripts, are reviewed for each marker. Where a single marker has been used, a minimum of six scripts are moderated. Where significant concerns are flagged, all scripts, not just the sample, are reviewed and adjusted accordingly for consistency. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that the module coordinator will re-mark scripts for a particular marker if there are doubts over consistency of grading. The team noted a couple of discrepancies in the marking of scripts provided in the sample of student work. In the first case, a grade of 50 per cent was awarded but the mark was 48.4 per cent. Staff who met the team outlined that this was marked at 50 per cent and then, during the moderation process, the mark was adjusted to 48.4 per cent based on the weighting of each section and rounded down to 48 per cent. This is clear evidence of the moderation process in use; therefore the team is satisfied. In the second case, a grade of 69.6 per cent was awarded, but was overridden with a grade of 72 per cent. Staff who met the team stated that this was a result of the new system of categorical marking, which had been implemented by the awarding partner, where a grade of 70 per cent would be rounded to 72 per cent (see also paragraphs 176 to 177). The categorical marking is clearly outlined in the example marking guidelines provided and the Institute's regulations handbook. Therefore, the team is satisfied that the Institute is correctly implementing the categorical marking policy set out by the University of Portsmouth and that the marking of student work is reliable. However, given the potential risk to grade inflation of this approach to marking, the Institute would be advised to continue its current dialogue with the University of Portsmouth (see also paragraphs 176, 177, and 197).
170. In cases where a single item of assessment is equivalent to 40 credits or more, double marking is deployed. Module coordinators complete moderation reports, which are reviewed alongside a sample of work by the external examiners. This was triangulated with the external examiners' reports, which state that they 'agree' that moderation systems are sufficiently robust to secure consistency of marking, reliability of results and fairness for students. Feedback in these reports is also positive in terms of appropriateness of assessment within the standards expected by students at other higher education providers, with additional comments made by external examiners at the academic board. The external examiners who

met the team reiterated that there is a clear marking process and a robust moderation process.

171. The Institute provides marking rubrics for all assessments, and these are available to students in the assessment briefs. When viewed on the VLE, the team identified inconsistencies with the weighting of some of the skills across modules at the same level. For example, across the range of modules on the Graduate Diploma, the marks awarded for 'academic and report writing skills' varied from 3 per cent and 5 per cent through to 10 per cent. In response to the team querying these inconsistencies, staff who met the team stated that there are no guidelines and the marks awarded are specific to each assessment. For consistency of information for students, and to ensure writing skills are appropriately credited, the team believes that the weighting should be consistent to ensure reliability in grading between modules. In response, staff who met the team stated that they had already started reviewing the consistency of marking rubrics and would be willing to incorporate a review of the weightings as part of that process.
172. In conclusion, the assessment team is confident that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that, for each higher education course, assessment is both valid and reliable.

Requirement B4.2.c

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible?

Advice to the OfS

173. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible. This is because the Institute uses regulations for all its courses that are appropriate and has suitable mechanisms for monitoring both the number and classifications of its courses over time to ensure that they remain credible.

Reasoning

174. In assessing condition B4.2.c, the team reviewed a range of evidence including academic regulations, examination and assessment regulations, quality handbook, external examiners' reports, minutes from assessment boards, and annual course and quality and standards evaluative reviews. The team met with senior academic staff and external examiners.
175. The academic regulations governing courses delivered by the Institute are clearly articulated in its regulations handbook. The handbook is made available to staff and students on the VLE. The handbook makes it clear that each higher education course is regulated by the University of Portsmouth and therefore the Institute's regulations must be read in conjunction with the university's 'Examination and Assessment Regulations in Partnership with the Institute for Optimum Nutrition', thus ensuring consistency with sector-recognised standards and external expectation.

176. The Institute's regulations handbook and the awarding partner's 'Examination and Assessment Regulations in partnership with the Institute for Optimum Nutrition' provide a comprehensive and structured articulation of assessment requirements, progression criteria, and the award of credit. This includes explicit definitions of categorical marking, which was implemented by the awarding partner and which the Institute is required to comply with. Categorical marking restricts the use of set marks in an assessment and, where sections are weighted in an assessment, the overall grade is rounded to the nearest available mark. The set marks of 42, 45, and 48 per cent are used across the 40 to 49 per cent boundary, and therefore a student with a score of 49 per cent for an assessment would see this rounded to 52 per cent. Likewise, a score of 46 per cent would be rounded to 48 per cent.
177. While having fewer marks may ensure greater reliability, it may risk grade inflation over time, something that the Institute has outlined to the awarding partner (see also paragraphs 169, 176 and 197). As outlined in paragraph 169, the Institute is advised to continue this dialogue with its awarding partner to avoid any potential grade inflation in future. The Institute's quality handbook provides a clear overview of the quality monitoring and assurance processes, including assessment quality, assessment marking standardisation requirements, and moderation. This provides further evidence of processes being in place to ensure students' awards are reliable.
178. The regulations handbook outlines the classification of final awards, enabling transparency and consistency in academic decision making. In addition, the handbook contains detailed procedural guidance covering key areas of academic administration and student support. These include the management of extenuating circumstances, processes for changes of study, and the handling of academic misconduct and breaches of academic integrity. The process for handling academic misconduct cases and the steps that the Institute has taken to minimise misconduct are discussed more fully in paragraphs 156 to 160. The handbook also sets out clear protocols for the submission and resolution of academic appeals and student complaints.
179. The Institute has various mechanisms in place to ensure that it regularly monitors and reviews classifications of its awards to ensure that they are comparable with those of other providers. For example, the team viewed external examiners' reports and minutes from assessment boards, whereby external examiners agreed with the feedback and marks given to students, and that processes for assessment, examination and determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted. They also confirmed that the standards of student performance at the Institute are comparable with those for similar subjects at other higher education providers. Additionally, internal annual course and quality and standards evaluative reviews for the awarding partner report on student progression and achievement in comparison with previous years to ensure the awards remain credible.
180. The team reviewed the Board of Examiners report from October 2024 and noted the Institute implemented two classification algorithms as outlined in the 'Examination and Assessment Regulations in Partnership with the Institute for Optimum Nutrition'. These are as follows:
- the classification of the weighted mean of all relevant credits at Level 6, after first discounting the marks in the worst 20 credits at Level 6

- the minimum classification in which more than 50 per cent of the combined relevant credits at Level 5 and Level 6 were attained, after first discounting the marks in the worst 20 credits both at Level 5 and at Level 6.
181. The team queried the consistency of classification awards prior to the visit, citing examples where overall marks of 59 per cent and 69 per cent had resulted in different outcomes regarding the award of the higher classification. The Institute explained the underlying module profiles in each case, and demonstrated that its student records system was correctly applying the approved classification algorithms. This confirmed that the higher classification had been awarded in accordance with the Institute's regulations where the relevant criteria had been met. The team is satisfied that the classification algorithms are being applied correctly and consistently.
182. The team was informed that, in September 2025, the University of Portsmouth updated its standard regulations, and the Institute has since used these for the Board of Examiners. In the October 2025 examination board, it is clear the following algorithms are in use:
- the classification of the weighted mean of all relevant credits at Level 5 and all relevant credits at Level 6 in the ratio of 40:60 respectively, after first discounting the marks in the worst 20 credits both at Level 5 and at Level 6
 - the classification of the weighted mean of all relevant credits at Level 6, after first discounting the marks in the worst 20 credits at Level 6.
183. The team noted that the module 'Clinical Practice 2', which contains the assessment of nutritional practice, represents 40 credits, and therefore the grades obtained from this module will contribute to the overall award classification. Therefore the team is satisfied the award reflects the necessary knowledge and skills for those students awarded their classification, based on the algorithms current being implemented.
184. In reviewing a recent report of the Board of Examiners, the team noted that having two algorithms does result in different classifications being calculated and therefore there is a risk of grade inflation occurring. Consequently, while it was clear that the academic regulations governing the assessment of modules and awards are credible and consistently applied, it is advised that the Institute continue its dialogue with the University of Portsmouth with regard to marking and the classification of awards over time to reduce the risk of grade inflation occurring.
185. The assessment team's judgement is that these regulations are sufficiently robust to ensure that relevant awards are credible, because they clearly set out an effective and consistent approach to the assessment and grading of students' work (including academic misconduct processes), the requirements for awards in terms of credit, and the methods used to determine classifications of those awards.

Requirement B4.2.d

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course, the academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course?

Advice to the OfS

186. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course, the academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the higher education courses the Institute intends to deliver. This is because the Institute has clearly articulated English language requirements for both home and international students published on its website. In addition, the team reviewed a sample of course documentation and student work, which provided further evidence that the Institute's academic framework supports the consistent and appropriate assessment of English language proficiency across its provision.

Reasoning

187. The team reviewed documentation, including course specifications, student admissions policy, course prospectus, assessment briefs, and a sample of students' summative assessments. The team met with students and academic and support staff.
188. The team was informed that 17 per cent of students at the Institute do not have English as their first language. The course specifications for the CertHE and BSc courses clearly stipulate the English language requirements, specifying that applicants must hold a Level 2 qualification in English (for example, GCSE grades A to C) or equivalent. Where English is not the applicant's first language, an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) qualification is required, with a minimum overall score of 6.0 for the CertHE and 7.0 for the BSc course, with achievement required across all four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking), or recognised equivalents. Alongside the IELTS requirements, all overseas applicants who hold qualifications that are not from the UK are required to have an interview to discuss these qualifications. As part of this interview process, applicants may be asked to complete a written task in real time, to confirm their writing ability.
189. For students in the UK whose first language is not English, the applicant's employment record is reviewed to triangulate their ability in the English language rather than undergoing a routine, formal interview. Staff who met the team confirmed that all students, regardless of location or first language, are required to have a Zoom call with an appropriate member of staff during the application and recruitment process that further allows the Institute to informally assess communication skills. Once students are on the course, the team heard that they have access to the academic support team for individual support sessions, should they need help with study skills such as academic writing and phrasing.

190. The team noted that equivalent requirements were not explicitly stated in the course specification for the Graduate Diploma. However, this was triangulated with the admissions policy which clearly sets out that applicants to degree- and diploma-level provision must demonstrate proficiency in written and spoken English to the standard defined by the NTEC. This standard is stated as equivalent to IELTS 7.0 or above, or a Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English at pass level. Where applicants are unable to provide formal evidence of achieving the required standard, the policy outlines that they may be assessed through an interview to evaluate oral English proficiency and a set written task to assess written competence. The Institute's prospectus also outlines that, for students whose first language is not English, IELTS Level 7 is required.
191. The team sampled summative assessments at Levels 4 to 6 to verify students' technical proficiency in written English. The marking rubrics include marking criteria that are attributed to academic writing and communication of ideas for each higher education course. In addition, the team observed live online teaching sessions including group sessions in online breakout rooms, as well as speaking with students on the visit, and all were articulate throughout. In all instances, the team noted the technical proficiency demonstrated by students to be of a level required to comprehend the content of their studies at each academic level.
192. The 'Examination and Assessment Regulations in Partnership with The Institute for Optimum Nutrition' requires course teams to utilise a range of assessment methods. The team was satisfied that a range of assessment methods was implemented, including role plays, recorded PowerPoint presentations, business plans, critical appraisals, and an independent research project, as detailed in paragraphs 145 to 147. The team therefore concluded that the varied nature of the assessment strategy requires students to demonstrate a sufficient level of English language proficiency in both written and oral form.
193. In conclusion, the assessment team is confident that the Institute has processes and assessments in place to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course.

Requirement B4.2.e

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans to ensure that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously?

Advice to the OfS

194. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared with those granted previously. This is because the Institute's assessment board processes and external examining procedures allow it to ensure this.

Reasoning

195. The team reviewed documentation, including academic regulations, examination and assessment regulations, external examiners' reports, minutes of academic board, board of examinations reports, annual course reports and quality and standards evaluative reviews. The team met with senior and academic staff, external examiners, and representatives from the awarding partner.
196. The team is satisfied that the Institute and its awarding partner are keeping under review the credibility of the awards being granted over time through the various processes in place. The Institute's regulations handbook makes clear reference to the awarding partner's specific partner regulations entitled 'Examination and Assessment Regulations in Partnership with the Institute for Optimum Nutrition'. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that each higher education course operates under these partner regulations. The partner regulations clearly detail the classification formulae used, which is commensurate with other higher education providers as evidenced in external examiners' reports, minutes of academic board, and the board of examinations reports.
197. In reviewing a recent Board of Examiners report, the team learned that having two algorithms results in different classifications being calculated and therefore there is a risk for grade inflation. Consequently, while it was clear that the academic regulations governing the assessment of modules and awards are credible and consistently applied, the team advises that the Institute continue its dialogue with the University of Portsmouth with regard to marking and classifying awards over time, to reduce the risk of grade inflation occurring. (See also paragraphs 169 and 177.)
198. Senior staff who met the team confirmed that the Institute's provision is subject to periodic reaccreditation on a three-year cycle by the professional body BANT. As part of this process, the provision is reviewed and any conditions arising from the review must be addressed by the Institute. Where conditions are imposed, the Institute is required to submit a report in the following year demonstrating how these have been met. Although the professional body does not undertake annual reviews of student work in the manner of an external examiner, the periodic reaccreditation process provides an additional external mechanism through which the quality and standards of the provision are scrutinised. Furthermore, the team saw evidence of an inspection conducted by the BAC in September 2025, whereby the Institute met all requirements and were reaccredited by the BAC for a further four years. The team considered that these external reviews and accreditations contribute to ensuring that awards remain credible at the point at which they are granted.
199. The team considers that the awards granted by the Institute to its higher education students reflect the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. The review of course content and assessment briefs demonstrates that students are assessed on their knowledge, understanding and skills in areas relevant to the subject matter of the course, and at the level appropriate for the module and course being studied. The production of annual course reports internally, and quality and standards evaluative reviews for the awarding partner, provide further evidence that quality assurance processes are in place to ensure that awards remain credible over time, for example with the continuing oversight of classification outcomes. Sections B4.2.a and B4.2.b show that the Institute effectively assesses students and makes

use of valid and reliable modes of assessment. Section B4.2.c shows that the academic regulations governing the assessment regime are credible and consistently applied.

200. Consequently, the assessment team conclude that the Institute has credible plans in place to ensure that awards granted to students are credible both at the point of award and in comparison with awards granted previously.

B4 conclusions

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition have credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B4 from the date of registration?

201. The assessment team's view is that, overall, the Institute has credible plans to ensure, if registered, that it would comply with the requirements of condition B4 with reference to assessment and awards.
202. The team found that the Institute's course documentation, assessment regulations and assessment and marking procedures demonstrate that students are effectively assessed, and those assessments are valid and reliable.
203. The course validation and review processes demonstrate that the academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are, and remain, credible. The team found the admissions procedures, standards evident in students' assessed work, and the engagement of students during meetings and observed teaching sessions demonstrate a good level of technical proficiency in the English language, in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the courses. In addition, through students' assessed work, assessment board processes and external examining procedures, the Institute demonstrates that the appropriate processes are in place to ensure that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared with those granted previously.
204. However, the team notes that, while the Institute is correctly implementing the categorical marking policy set out by the University of Portsmouth and the algorithms for calculating the degree classifications, there is a potential risk of grade inflation. Therefore, it advises that the Institute continue its current dialogue with the University of Portsmouth regarding this concern.
205. Considering its findings at B4.2.a, B4.2.b, B4.2.c, B4.2.d and B4.2.e, and the reasoning they contain, the assessment team's view is that the Institute has credible plans to ensure students will continue to receive a high quality academic experience.

Part 2: Assessment of condition B8 – Standards

206. This section sets out advice on whether the Institute has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B8 from the date of registration.

Requirement: Standards

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition demonstrate in a credible manner that the standards set for the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards?

Advice to the OfS

207. Based on the evidence provided, the assessment team's view is that the standards set for the courses the Institute intends to provide, should it be registered, appropriately reflect the sector-recognised standards applicable at the time of the assessment.

Reasoning

A.1: Qualifications at each level

208. The team's view is that the Institute has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it plans to deliver will appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.1 of the sector-recognised standards.

209. Based on the evidence provided, the team's view is that the titles of qualifications delivered by the Institute accurately reflect students' achievement, and the typical volume, level and field of study undertaken.

210. The provider intends to continue to offer the BSc and CertHE courses if they are registered with the OfS, but the Graduate Diploma will be phased out in 2027. The awards currently offered by the Institute are as follows:

- BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy
- BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy top-up option (available to students with existing nutritional therapy diplomas at Level 6)
- CertHE personalised diet and health
- Graduate Diploma in integrative functional nutrition
- Graduate Diploma in integrative functional nutrition with clinical practice
- Diploma in nutritional therapy (currently being phased out until 2027)
- credit-bearing short courses (each module can be taken independently, and, for most modules, credits can be accumulated towards either the Graduate Diploma or degree).

211. Subject to validation by the University of Portsmouth, the Institute plans to introduce:

- Postgraduate Certificate in personalised nutrition and lifestyle education (as an intermediate award for students who do not progress to the full Postgraduate Diploma)
- Postgraduate Diploma in personalised nutrition and lifestyle medicine
- Top-up masters' in personalised nutrition and lifestyle medicine practice.

212. The team takes the view that the Institute has identified and applied appropriate titles for each qualification considered here. The courses and their titles align with the requirements set out in Table 1 of the OfS sector-recognised standards.

213. The course specifications demonstrate that each course is set at the appropriate level and that the titles of the awards the Institute offers convey appropriate information about the level of the qualification, the volume, nature and field of study undertaken.

214. In addition, the final exit award of the BSc (Hons) is awarded on completion of a course of study at Level 6, with the Diploma in Higher Education at Level 5, and the CertHE at Level 4, as evidenced by the course specification and course handbook.

A.2: Typical volumes of credit for qualifications

215. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it plans to deliver appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.2 of the sector-recognised standards.

216. The required volume of learning, in terms of credits for each award, is outlined in the respective course handbooks. The credit structure and requirements for each award reflect those of the Institute's awarding partner. The team reviewed the total credit value and the required credit at each level for the courses the Institute intends to provide if registered. Each course appropriately reflects the credit values set out in Table 2 of the sector-recognised standards document. For example, the credit values for the CertHE (120 credits), Diploma in Higher Education (240 credits), and the BSc (Hons) (360 credits) accurately reflect those which students must achieve for each award. The volume of credits for the achievement of the Graduate Diploma is listed as 120 credits in the course handbook, reflecting the volume outlined in the documentation of the awarding partner. This exceeds the requirement in Table 2, where 80 credits are required for a Graduate Diploma at Level 6.

217. There is also evidence of the Institute fulfilling the requirement of 10 notional learning hours equating to one credit, thus making explicit an indication of the approximate learning time required of each student. This requirement is listed in the awarding partner's curriculum framework, which clearly states that 20 credits are equal to 200 hours of learning, and therefore 120 credits require 1,200 hours of learning.

A.3: Qualification descriptors

218. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it intends to provide appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.3 of the sector-recognised standards.

219. The team reviewed the Institute's course specifications and course handbooks and was of the view that the learning, teaching and assessment strategies, alongside the course learning

outcomes, are commensurate with the expected threshold standards for Levels 4, 5 and 6, respectively.

220. The course specification for the CertHE accurately reflects the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 4, as outlined in part A.3.1 of the sector-recognised standards. The course specification groups learning outcomes under the themes of 'knowledge and understanding', 'cognitive skills', 'practical skills' and 'transferable skills'. For example, students are required to demonstrate 'knowledge and understanding of scientific principles, method and knowledge of systems biology'. This aligns with the Level 4 qualification descriptor in paragraph 14 of the sector-recognised standards, which refers to 'knowledge of underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study'.
221. The team found that this alignment is reflected in module learning outcomes. For example, in the module 'Principles of Functional Nutrition', the outcome 'explain the biochemical, physiological and psychological effects of nutrient deficiencies' demonstrates alignment with the expectations for Level 4 study. Further examples include the learning outcome 'analyse information from a variety of sources to support the construction of an argument,' which aligns with the descriptor requiring students to 'evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument', as set out in paragraph 14 of part A.3.1.
222. The team found that the Institute's Level 5 of the BSc course (and the Diploma in Higher Education exit award) appropriately reflects the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 5, as set out in part A.3.2 of the sector-recognised standards. Although the course specification does not differentiate course learning outcomes by level, the team found that Level 5 module learning outcomes in 'Functional Nutrition 2' clearly require students to 'apply', 'appraise', and 'present a pertinent argument'. These action verbs are commensurate with the expectations set out in paragraph 19 of the sector-recognised standards, which state that students should demonstrate the ability to 'apply', 'evaluate' and 'communicate information, arguments and analysis'.
223. The team found that this alignment is reinforced through module assessment design. For example, students are required to 'analyse given case information' and provide a 'safe and appropriate staged client plan' in the module 'Functional Nutrition 1'. As part of this assessment, students must ensure that the staged client plan is 'written in client-friendly language'. The team found that these requirements align with paragraph 19 of the sector-recognised standards, which state that students should demonstrate the ability to 'apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in employment contexts'. Furthermore, paragraph 20 of the standards states students should be able to 'undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis'. Therefore, the team was satisfied the module learning outcomes at Level 5 appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.3 of the sector-recognised standards.
224. The BSc course appropriately reflects the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6, as set out in part A.3.3 of the sector-recognised standards. This is because the course learning outcomes outlined in the course specification require students to 'critically analyse information, within an evidence informed practice context', and to 'critically evaluate professional interactions using feedback, personal reflection and the observation of others to consolidate clinical judgement, and performance'. Furthermore, students are required to

‘synthesize knowledge and understanding’ and ‘applying critical thinking and independent decision-making’. These course learning outcomes align with descriptors outlined in paragraphs 25 to 29 of the sector-recognised standards for a Level 6 higher education qualification.

225. The team reviewed the Level 6 module handbooks for the BSc course and found that the module learning outcomes appropriately reflect the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6, as set out in part A.3.3 of the sector-recognised standards. For example, in ‘Clinical Practice 2’, students are required to ‘synthesize knowledge and understanding from all relevant modules’. The team found that this aligns with paragraph 25 of the sector-recognised standards, which requires students to demonstrate ‘a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study’.
226. Additionally, students are required to ‘independently carry out a research activity’, and to ‘critically evaluate study findings in the context of the available published literature’ in the ‘Research Project’ module. This aligns the sector-recognised standards requiring students to ‘deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry’, and ‘describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research’, as detailed in paragraph 25 of part A3.3. It further aligns with paragraph 26, where students are required to ‘initiate and carry out projects’. The team considered that this requirement appropriately reflects the independent and research-informed nature of honours-level study. The use of the action verbs ‘critically’, ‘synthesize’, and ‘evaluate’ in the learning outcomes of the ‘Business and Career Planning’ and ‘Clinical Practice 2’ modules was found to be commensurate with the expectations of honours-level study and reflective of the requirement for students to apply analytical and evaluative skills in both academic and professional contexts.
227. The team also found that students are required to ‘conduct a series of safe and competent consultations, both initial and follow-up, in a real working environment, meeting the scope of practice requirements and the national occupational standards for the profession’ as part of the ‘Clinical Practice 2’ module. This was found to align with paragraph 25 of part A.3.3, which requires students to demonstrate the ability to ‘solve problems using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline’. The requirement for students to undertake consultations in a professional practice environment reflects the expectations set out in paragraphs 26 to 29 of the sector-recognised standards, relating to the application of knowledge, professional responsibility and decision making in complex contexts. Consequently, the team’s view is that the standards of the Institute’s courses align with those of the sector-recognised standards for Level 6 qualifications.
228. The team reviewed the course specification for the Graduate Diploma and found that the qualification appropriately reflects the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6, as set out in part A.3.3 of the sector-recognised standards. This is because the course learning outcomes require students to ‘synthesize knowledge and understanding from all modules of the course to defend case management, within an integrative / systems / functional medicine framework’, which reflects the sector-recognised standard detailed in paragraph 25 requiring students to demonstrate ‘a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study’. The requirement for students to synthesise knowledge across modules and defend case management decisions was also found to reflect the honours-level expectation of requiring students to ‘evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements’.

229. Furthermore, students are required to 'communicate effectively and accurately through a range of media', which aligns with the requirement to 'communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions' as stated in paragraph 26. Likewise, students must 'critically evaluate the therapeutic encounter', again aligning to the requirements of part A3.3.
230. This alignment is reinforced in module learning outcomes contained in the 'Modulation of Cardiometabolic Function', 'Modulation of Detoxification and Gastrointestinal Function', 'Modulation of Immune Function' and 'Behaviour Change in Nutrition and Lifestyle Practice' module handbooks, where students are required to 'critically discuss' and 'critically appraise'. The team considered that the use of these action verbs is also consistent with Bloom's Taxonomy and commensurate with the analytical and evaluative expectations of Level 6 study.
231. The team reviewed the Level 6 'Clinical Practice 2' module, which provides the training clinic competencies for the BSc course, and found clear evidence that the module has been mapped against the national occupational standards overseen by the CNHC. In addition, modules across both the BSc and Graduate Diploma courses have been mapped against the subject benchmark statements for nutritional therapy produced by the CNHC. The team found that this mapping provides further evidence that the courses align with the sector-recognised standards set out in A.3.3, as it demonstrates that course content, learning outcomes and professional competencies are informed by externally recognised academic and occupational standards appropriate to Level 6 study. The team also found that the mapping supports the expectations in paragraphs 25 to 29 of part A.3.3, particularly in relation to the application of knowledge and techniques, the exercise of professional judgement and responsibility, and the ability to apply learning in complex circumstances.
232. In summary, the assessment team's view is that the Institute has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it intends to provide appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.3 of the sector-recognised standards.

B: Classification descriptors for Level 6 bachelors' degrees

233. The assessment team's view is that the Institute has demonstrated in a credible manner that, if it is registered, the courses it intends to provide appropriately reflect the standards set out in part B of the sector-recognised standards.
234. Part B of the sector-recognised standards document is relevant to the BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy. The course appropriately reflects the classification descriptors set out in Table 3 of the sector-recognised standards, because the descriptors for the Level 6 degree clearly differentiate the standard of achievement expected across award classifications. For example, the level grading descriptors show that to achieve a pass, students are required to 'attempt to evaluate', whereas a first class award requires students to provide a 'critical evaluation'.
235. The team found that these descriptors align with the sector-recognised standards set out in Table 5, which detail the cognitive skills associated with classification bands. In particular, the standards indicate that a pass-level performance should demonstrate the ability to 'select, evaluate and comment', whereas a first class performance should demonstrate the ability to 'critically evaluate and synthesise'. The team considered that the progression in language

appropriately reflects the increasing levels of criticality, analysis and synthesis expected in honours-level study.

236. A review of specific marking rubrics for Level 6 modules provides further evidence: for example, a first class award for a research project discussion requires students to provide ‘a highly relevant, critical, analytical, and nuanced discussion of research findings in the context of the wider literature, with advanced synthesis of diverse sources’. This aligns with part B of the sector-recognised standards detailed in Table 5, where students are required to ‘critically evaluate and synthesise a wide range of views and information’ and have ‘demonstrated sophisticated perception, critical insight and interpretation of complex matters and ideas’. This is in comparison with a failed piece of work, wherein a student provides ‘a mostly irrelevant, uncritical, and unanalytical discussion of research findings in the context of the wider literature, which lacks meaningful synthesis of sources’. Again, this aligns to the sector-recognised standards, whereby an unsuccessful student’s ‘arguments and explanations are weak and/or poorly constructed, and they are not able to critically evaluate the arguments of others or consider alternative views’.
237. In the module ‘Clinical Practice 2’, a first class student would provide work with ‘significant and insightful observations made in relation to the clinical encounter’ and ‘evidence of integration of insights into new understanding and future development’. This aligns with Table 7 ‘Transferable Skills’ of the sector-recognised standards, whereby a first class degree is awarded when ‘the student has demonstrated an exceptional ability to reflect critically and independently on their work’. In comparison, a fail grade for the same assessment is where the student has demonstrated ‘little or no understanding of a reflective account’. This aligns with the sector-recognised standards, which state that ‘the student has shown little or no ability to reflect on their work’. Furthermore, in the ‘Research Skills’ module, the words ‘highly sophisticated’ are linked to a first class performance, with ‘identifies relevant’ for a pass, and ‘identifies little’ for a failure grade.
238. The assessment team’s view is that the classification descriptors set out the outcomes and attributes expected for the award of a bachelors’ degree in a particular classification, because they articulate what students must demonstrate to achieve a certain classification. The team’s view is that they align with the relevant sector-recognised standards for classifications.

Requirement: Student achievement

Does the Institute for Optimum Nutrition demonstrate in a credible manner that the achievement of students on the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect applicable sector-recognised standards?

Advice to the OfS

239. The assessment team’s view is that the achievement of students on the courses the Institute intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflects applicable sector-recognised standards.

Reasoning

A.1: Qualifications at each level

240. The assessment team examined a range of assessed work and associated feedback for each higher education course and across Levels 4 to 6. This provided direct evidence of the level of work assessed. The team also reviewed recent external examiners' reports, details of assessment boards, and course specifications. This showed that assessment of student work is in line with sector standards, and that awards currently made to students on each course appropriately reflect the titles set out in the course specifications.
241. External examiners' reports back up the findings of the team's review of assessed work in showing that the provider's assessments are fair and appropriate for the awards provided, and that they align well with the academic standards expected of such courses. The assessment boards clearly record the credit achieved by each student and their progression status. Where a student has withdrawn from the course, the appropriate exit qualification is awarded in accordance with the credit achieved. Students who have successfully completed 120 credits are awarded a CertHE, while those who have completed 240 credits are awarded a DipHE. Students who successfully complete 360 credits are awarded the BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy.

A.2: Typical volumes of credit for qualifications

242. The Institute has demonstrated that it designs and delivers higher education courses with the correct volume of credit as set out in the course specifications. The Institute's delivery of teaching and learning, combined with assessment board processes and evidence from external examiners' reports, demonstrate that students earn an appropriate volume of credit for the awards they receive. For example, assessment board documentation clearly shows that only students who have completed 120 credits at Level 4 are awarded the CertHE, while those with 360 credits are awarded the BSc (Hons).
243. Those undertaking the Graduate Diploma require 120 credits for the full award. While this is above the sector-recognised standards of 80 credits detailed in Table 2 of part A.2, the Institute is meeting its requirements. The team did note that the Graduate Certificate exit award is awarded to students who obtain 60 credits. However, exit awards are not listed in the course specification. The Institute confirmed prior to the visit that it has approached the awarding partner to discuss this issue.
244. The Institute has planned its learning and teaching activities on the basis that each credit equates to 10 learning hours, thus making explicit an indication of the approximate learning time required of each student (see also paragraphs 88 and 217). This requirement is listed in the awarding partner's curriculum framework, which clearly states that 20 credits are equal to 200 hours of learning and therefore 120 credits require 1,200 hours of learning. For example, the 'Clinical Practice 2' module specification specifies 400 notional hours for 40 credits and, for 'Functional Nutrition 2', the module specification specifies 200 notional hours for 20 credits.

A.3: Qualification descriptors

245. The assessment team's view is that the achievement of students awarded higher education qualifications at the Institute appropriately reflects all parts of the relevant descriptors at Level

4 as set out in paragraphs 13 to 17 in Section A.3.1 of the sector-recognised standards, at Level 5 as set out in paragraphs 18-23 in Section A.3.2, and at Level 6 as set out in paragraphs 24-29 in Section A.3.3. The team reviewed a sample of assignment briefs and student-assessed work for each higher education course that the Institute delivers at Levels 4 to 6.

246. The team found direct evidence that assessed student work is at the appropriate threshold level and, based on a sample, students consistently meet the relevant descriptors for each award. For example, Level 4 assignments reviewed by the team evidenced explicit feedback such as 'demonstration of a comprehensive understanding of possible factors influencing dietary compliance' (in the module 'Principles of Functional Nutrition'), and students being able to clearly 'evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data' as part of the 'Foundations of Clinical Practice' portfolio submission, where they are required to provide a 'rationale that is supported by a logical and rigorous analysis of all analysed data in context'. The comments reflect the appropriate descriptors for a Level 4 qualification.
247. Similarly, the team reviewed a sample of assessed work at Level 6 of the BSc and Graduate Diploma courses and found that students clearly demonstrated skills and knowledge aligned with the sector-recognised standards for Level 6 qualifications. Examples include students providing critical discussion, synthesis and analysis as part of the 'Clinical Practice 2' module, and demonstrating an ability to critically evaluate and discuss functional testing to advance the understanding and professional approach to case management. For the 'Clinical Practice' module on the Graduate Diploma, students provide critical analysis and evaluation of a client case study they have observed in the training clinic, alongside critical self-reflection of their clinical interactions with the client. Further evidence of students' ability to critically evaluate complex case studies and critically reflect and identify personal development needs is evident in the sample of work provided for the 'Modulation of Neuroendocrine Function' and 'Modulation of Immune Function' modules.

B: Classification descriptors for Level 6 bachelors' degrees

248. The assessment team considered a range of documentation, including the BSc course specification, a sample of Level 6 assignment briefs, and a sample of assessed work at Level 6, including marks across different classifications. The team found evidence that the marks awarded for student achievement were consistently in line with the relevant classification descriptors, and that feedback clearly indicated the reasons for the mark, and referenced the relevant marking criteria and learning outcomes. Feedback provided to students also makes it clear how the student could improve their marks in future.
249. Each module has an associated marking rubric aligned with its specified module learning outcomes. These rubrics are incorporated in assessment briefs, which are made available to students in advance of submission via the VLE. The bespoke rubrics are applied consistently in the marking process, with marks awarded against each criterion, as evidenced in the sample of assessed work.
250. The Institute's academic regulations clearly refer to a generic categorical marking scale for the undergraduate provision, where a grading scale of 0 to 100 is used. Students achieving above the pass mark of 40 per cent are required to 'meet all the intended learning outcomes', which aligns with Table 3 of the sector-recognised standards. The Institute also has level marking descriptors, where a first class award at Level 6 requires a student to have an

‘exceptional depth of discussion through clear, fluent, and concise explanations/critique of material’. In comparison, a pass (40 to 49 per cent) is awarded when ‘some attempt to evaluate’ is evidenced. Failed grades (0 to 39 per cent) are awarded when students ‘fail to develop discussions with rationale for ideas’.

251. For example, in the research project module, the expectations for classification are clearly differentiated. Students attaining a first class award are required to demonstrate ‘a highly relevant, critical, analytical, and nuanced discussion of research findings and the wider literature, with advanced synthesis of source’. In contrast, students achieving a third-class award are expected to provide only a ‘partly relevant, critical, and analytical discussion of research findings’. These descriptors align with the classification standards for Level 6 awards, as set out in Table 4 of the sector-recognised standards.
252. In their reports, the external examiners ‘agree’ that ‘the standards of student performance are comparable with those in similar subjects in other UK institutions’, and ‘the standards set for the assessments are appropriate for a qualification at this level’.
253. In conclusion, the assessment team’s view is that the classification descriptors set out the outcomes and attributes expected for the award of a bachelors’ degree in a particular classification, because they articulate what students must demonstrate to achieve at each level.

Annex A: Approach to sampling of evidence

1. The Institute currently delivers a range of online higher education courses under a validation arrangement with the University of Portsmouth. These include a BSc (Hons) nutritional therapy, a CertHE personalised diet and health (Level 4), and a Level 6 Graduate Diploma in integrative functional nutrition (with a clinical practice option). Although it no longer recruits new students to the Diploma in nutritional therapy, the Institute will continue to teach out students on this course until 2027.
2. Because of the relatively small number of higher education courses, it was deemed proportionate and representative to request a sample of course content and anonymised assessed work for each course:
 - BA (Hons) nutritional therapy and CertHE personalised diet and health:
 - two pieces of assessed student work from each module across Levels 4 to 6 (not including the Research Project module but including at least three assignments for students who completed the CertHE course), with the sample to include: a range of different types of assignments; at least five assignments from each of the grade categories; and each assignment being from a different student
 - two research projects (Level 6)
 - for each piece of assessed work, the inclusion of documentation relevant to assessment practices, for example assessment brief, mark and grade awarded, and feedback given
 - course specifications
 - module handbooks
 - student handbook.
 - Graduate Diploma in integrative functional nutrition:
 - two pieces of assessed student work from each module, with the sample to include: a range of different types of assignments; at least two assignments from each of the grade categories; and each assignment being from a different student
 - course specification
 - student handbook
 - module handbooks.
3. In addition, the Institute provided relevant extracts of paperwork from the most recent award boards for all the above courses:
 - credits accumulated by students, awards granted and classifications for the most recent two-year period

- relevant external examiner reports considered as part of the most recent award boards outlined above
 - documentation from any boards concerned only with module outcomes or progression are not required.
4. The assessment team considered this an appropriate sample of course and module documentation to enable it to advise on whether the standards set for the courses provided by the Institute, if it is registered, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards. It covered a range of courses and levels.
 5. The Institute provided student-assessed work, evidence of student achievement, and award board paperwork. For each piece of student work, the Institute provided the relevant assessment brief, assessment mark and the feedback given to the student. The team considered this random sample of student work to be a proportionate and representative sample to enable it to reach a view on whether the achievement of students on the courses provided by the Institute, if it is registered, appropriately reflect the applicable sector-recognised standards.

Annex B: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
BAC	British Accreditation Council
BANT	British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine
CNHC	Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council
CPD	continuing professional development
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
NTEC	Nutritional Therapy Education Commission
OfS	Office for Students
VLE	Virtual learning environment



© The Office for Students copyright 2026

This publication is available under the Open Government Licence 3.0 except where it indicates that the copyright for images or text is owned elsewhere.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/