

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	York St John University
Name of programme(s)	Doctorate of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsy), Full time
Approval visit date	15-16 January 2019
Case reference	CAS-13559-S7Z2D5

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Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards

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

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Antony Ward	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
Jai Shree Adhyaru	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
Ismini Tsikaderi	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Jane Rand	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	York St John University
Jo Morgan	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	York St John University
Helen Nicholas	Joint panel	British Psychological Society
Laura Winter	Joint panel	British Psychological Society

Ian Ascroft	Joint panel	British Psychological Society
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Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Doctorate of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsy)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Practitioner psychologist
Modality	Counselling psychologist
First intake	01 September 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 12
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02001

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Prior to the visit, the education provider informed us that they were recruiting learners to this programme from September 2018. We do not offer retrospective approval, and so informed the education provider that we would not be able to backdate their approval so these learners would be eligible to apply for HCPC registration. Through these conversations, the education provider noted that they would make arrangements to transfer current learners to the programme once it is approved.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted	Reason(s) for non-submission
Programme specification	Yes	
Module descriptor(s)	Yes	
Handbook for learners	Yes	
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes	
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes	
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes	
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Not Required	The programme visited is a new programme, which is the reason

		why reports for the last two years are not available.
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We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	Met learners, who the education provider plans to transfer to the programme if it receives HCPC approval.
Senior staff	Yes	
Practice education providers	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 21 March 2019.

2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must show how they use equality and diversity data related to applicants, to demonstrate that these policies are implemented and monitored.

Reason: In the documentation, there is evidence to support the policies in place to apply during the application process. The programme team mentioned Tableau (software) used as a tool to collect and analyse equality and diversity data at the end of the academic year when there is a review of every programme. However, from conversations, the visitors were unclear what actions the team would take following data collection from applicants. The visitors underlined the fact that even though there

are quality and diversity policies in relation to the applicants in place, they must ensure that these policies are implemented and monitored. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence on how data relating to equality and diversity collected through the admissions process is used by the programme team within the equality and diversity policy.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which clarifies the role and responsibilities of the clinical supervisor.

Reason: In the documentation the education provider noted that each trainee is allocated to a specific clinical supervisor. The visitors noted that a practice coordinator will review suitability of the placement and supervision arrangements before a clinical supervisor is allocated. In the documentation there is information on supervisor allocation “as an adjunct supervisor” independent to staff on the programme. From discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that in terms of ethics for trainees the programme team has plans on avoiding staff being in dual roles as an academic staff and a clinical supervisor at the same time. The visitors were unable to understand the core elements of a clinical supervisor’s role and responsibilities during discussions in the programme team meeting. Thus, the visitors require further evidence which articulates the role and responsibilities of the clinical supervisor.

3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.

Condition: The education provider must show how they use equality and diversity data related to learners, to demonstrate that these policies are implemented and monitored.

Reason: In the documentation the visitors noted equality and diversity policies are present for current learners on the programme. While discussions at the visit, the visitors discussed how the education provider ensure implementation and monitoring of these policies in relation to learners is done. The programme team underlined that data collection is done. The visitors noted that there is a software tool in place to facilitate data collection. However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider ensure these policies in relation to learners are implemented and monitored. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence on how data relating to equality and diversity collected while learners are recruited on the programme is used by the programme team within the equality and diversity policy.

3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the cohort of learners admitted in September 2018 will be transferred onto the approved programme, to ensure that they are eligible to apply for admission to the Register.

Reason: In the post visit process, the visitors identified that the education provider recruited a set of learners in September 2018 who they intend to be eligible to apply for registration if the programme is approved. The education provider considers that these

learners are already on the programme, as it has started running. However, for the purposes of regulatory approval, the programme's first approved intake date will be September 2019, if it is approved. Therefore, as the visitors currently understand the situation, these learners would not have started on an approved programme, and would not be eligible to apply for registration should they complete the programme. The visitors noted that there was no information about this proposal in the education provider's documentary submission, and were therefore unable to determine how these learners would commence the programme from September 2019, as we would require as a regulator should these learners be eligible to apply for registration. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which demonstrates how the education provider will admit the cohort of learners recruited prior to HCPC approval onto the programme from September 2019, should it be approved.

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how their system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning is effective.

Reason: From the documentation which was relevant to learners' performance of practice-based learning the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider approves and ensures the quality of practice-based learning. The visitors noted that the education provider are in partnership with three NHS trusts to provide practice-based learning to learners. From discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that there is an audit process in place to ensure quality in practice-based learning, which is implemented in the Clinical Psychology programme. The visitors understood that evidence of an audit tool in relation to the Counselling Psychology programme will be produced, but that this tool does not yet exist for this programme. Therefore, the visitors are unclear how the education provider approves and ensures the quality of practice-based learning for this programme, as they have not seen information about the system that will be used. Thus, the visitors require further evidence of the process to ensure quality of practice-based learning.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure training which practice educators undertake is appropriate to their role, learner's needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation, the education provider state that all clinical supervisors in practice-based learning are "appropriately trained psychologists". From discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that practice educators gain the qualification of a supervisor only when they attend training on supervising trainees in the clinical placement setting. The visitors understood that the education provider has made arrangements for provision of training to practice educators. In discussions at the programme team meeting the education provider mentioned that evidence around placements will not be ready until trainees go on their first placement. Therefore, the visitors were unclear what training practice educators undertake and how the education provider ensures it is regular and appropriate to the programme. The visitors require

further evidence of training practice educators undertake which happens on a regular basis.

6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how assessment throughout the programme ensure that the standards of conduct, performance and ethics are met, and must ensure that they are directly referenced in each module.

Reason: In a review of the documentation, the visitors noted reference to HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics as part of the programme handbook. Additionally, the visitors noted that expectation of professional behaviour is noted in the programme specification listed among the programme aims and learning outcomes. Similarly, expectation of the behaviour of the learners is mentioned on the placement handbook as part of the objectives of practice-based learning. Additionally, the visitors noted that assessment on learners' behaviour is mentioned under modules DCP110 and DCP323. However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider will ensure that learners' behaviour is assessed throughout the programme. During discussions with the programme team, the visitors understood that assessment of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics throughout the modules of the programme is under development. Thus, the visitors require further evidence on how learners' behaviour is assessed throughout the modules on the programme and further evidence on the standards of conduct, performance and ethics being directly referenced in each module.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider maximising the impact of the Programme Advisory Group to achieve more regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice education providers.

Reason: From the documentation provided and discussions at the visit, the visitors were made aware of the Programme Advisory Group (PAG) used to facilitate collaboration between the education provider and the practice education providers. From the evidence provided, the visitors were satisfied that this standard was met at threshold level. In the practice education meeting however, the visitors understood that even though practice educators were part of the PAG meeting they were unclear on what the education provider expects of them for the new programme. The visitors noted that PAG is happening annually, with the next one being held in January 2020. The education provider should therefore consider arrangements for holding the PAG meeting on a more regular basis, to ensure information is shared in a timely manner.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: Service users and carers should be more actively involved in the programme and their level of involvement on the programme should be made clear from the start.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met at threshold level, as service users and carers did have input on the new programme. However, from discussion with the service users and carers, the visitors noted that their level of involvement on the programme is limited. The visitors understood that service users and carers are willing to take part in the programme actively through direct involvement in the admissions process and possibly through sharing experiences with the learners. Additionally, the visitors noted that the information on their involvement in the programme was communicated to them only via email. Therefore, the visitors recommend strengthening involvement of service users and carers by widening participation in the areas of the programme while making their level of involvement clear through further communication with them.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 24 April 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).