

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Central Lancashire
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Sciences
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	15 – 16 December 2015

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Biomedical scientist' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 20 May 2016. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - the level of qualification for entry to the Register, programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HCPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Pradeep Agrawal (Biomedical scientist) Robert Keeble (Biomedical scientist) Sue Roff (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	20 per cohort, one cohort per year
First approved intake	1 September 2014
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 September 2015
Chair	Peter Robinson (University of Central Lancashire)
Secretary	Susan Avanson (University of Central Lancashire)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☐	☐	☒

The education provider did not submit external examiner reports from the last two years as the programme started in 2014 and these have not yet been produced.

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators / mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Service users and carers	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

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

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

The visitors agreed that 47 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining eleven SETs.

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

The visitors have also made a recommendation for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure it is up to date and that the terminology in use is correct and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included several instances of incorrect and out of date terminology. For example, page 23 of the student handbook references the HCPC as the professional body, the programmes web page also states that HCPC is an “external influencer”. This is incorrect as the HCPC is the regulatory body, not the professional body or an external influencer. The visitors also noted a number of instances of outdated terminology such as referencing the HCPC’s old name (HPC) and referencing “state registration” which is no longer in existence. The visitors therefore require documentation to be revised to remove all instances of incorrect terminology and ensure it communicates up to date information on the resources available to students. This way the visitors can be sure that the documentary resources available to support students’ learning are being effectively used and that this standard continues to be met.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The education provider must identify a clear and documented process for taking students consent prior to giving blood in practical sessions.

Reason: Prior to the visit the visitors reviewed a consent form which was to be signed by students ahead of practical sessions and gave their consent to giving blood via a thumb prick for analysis. However, in a meeting with students and the programme team it became clear that this consent form was not currently being used. The programme team and students stated that verbal consent was given by each student at the beginning of practical sessions where blood was taken and students had the option to opt out. However, the visitors noted that without a formal process in place ahead of each session they cannot be sure that the consent process will continue for the duration of the programme. The visitors also noted that they cannot be certain, with the current verbal consent process, that students are giving informed consent ahead of each session. The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates that there is an effective, formal and documented process in place to obtain student consent when taking blood in practical and clinical teaching.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for biomedical scientists.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were provided with a SOPs mapping document to demonstrate which learning outcomes on the programme ensure that students are able to meet the SOPs for biomedical scientists on successful completion of the programme.

However, the education provider used the outdated SOPs for biomedical scientists in this mapping document. The visitors noted that without seeing how the programme delivers the current SOPs for biomedical scientists they cannot see how the programme ensures that those who successfully complete the programme have met the standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide appropriate and up to date documentation which effectively demonstrates how the SOPs are delivered throughout the programme to ensure that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they own and maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring placements.

Reason: Prior to the visit and in conversation with the programme team it was stated that all practice placements must be accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) before they can act as a practice placement for the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The visitors were satisfied that this was an appropriate requirement to ensure that all practice placements are suitable, however, the visitors were unable to locate any information which demonstrates how UCLAN maintain ownership of the audit process. The programme team stated that they receive an email from IBMS each year to confirm which placements are approved and also receive updates via email should a placement have its accreditation revoked. However, the visitors were unable to see any evidence to support these statements. Furthermore the education provider stated that any emails are received by the programme leader only, the visitors could not see how this information may be picked up in the programme leaders absence. In addition to this, the visitors noted that approving and monitoring practice placements is the education provider's responsibility but the education provider has not demonstrated how they record and maintain information on each placement provider once this information has been received from the IBMS each year. The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates how the education provider owns and maintains a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring placements.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates an effective process for ensuring that placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place in relation to students.

Reason: Prior to the visit and in conversation with the programme team it was stated that all practice placements must be accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) before they can act as a practice placement for the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The visitors were satisfied that this was an appropriate requirement to ensure that all practice placements have equality and diversity policies in place, however, the visitors were unable to locate any information which demonstrates how UCLAN maintain ownership of the audit process. The programme team stated that they receive an email from IBMS each year to confirm which placements are approved and also receive updates via email should a placement have its accreditation revoked.

However, the visitors were unable to see any evidence to support these statements. Furthermore the education provider stated that any emails are received by the programme leader only, the visitors could not see how this information may be picked up in the programme leaders absence. In addition to this, the visitors noted that approving and monitoring practice placements is the education provider's responsibility but the education provider has not demonstrated how they record and maintain information on each placement provider once this information has been received from the IBMS each year. The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates how the education provider owns and maintains a thorough and effective system for ensuring that all practice placements have equality and diversity policies in place.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates an effective process for ensuring there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting.

Reason: Prior to the visit and in conversation with the programme team it was stated that all practice placements must be accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) before they can act as a practice placement for the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The visitors were satisfied that this was an appropriate requirement to ensure that all practice placements have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place, however, the visitors were unable to locate any information which demonstrates how UCLAN maintain ownership of the audit process. The programme team stated that they receive an email from IBMS each year to confirm which placements are approved and also receive updates via email should a placement have its accreditation revoked. However, the visitors were unable to see any evidence to support these statements. Furthermore the education provider stated that any emails are received by the programme leader only, the visitors could not see how this information may be picked up in the programme leaders absence. In addition to this, the visitors note that the education provider has not demonstrated how they store and maintain information on each placement provider once this information has been received from the IBMS each year. This condition is linked to conditions under SETs 5.4 and 5.5 of this report. The visitors therefore require further evidence that demonstrates that all practice placements have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates an effective process for ensuring that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: Prior to the visit and in conversation with the programme team it was stated that all practice placements must be accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) before they can act as a practice placement for the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The visitors were satisfied that this was an appropriate requirement to ensure that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience, however, the visitors were unable to locate any information which

demonstrates how UCLAN maintain ownership of the audit process. The programme team stated that they receive an email from IBMS each year to confirm which placements are approved and also receive updates via email should a placement have its accreditation revoked. However, the visitors were unable to see any evidence to support these statements. Furthermore the education provider stated that any emails are received by the programme leader only, the visitors could not see how this information may be picked up in the programme leaders absence. In addition to this, the visitors note that the education provider has not demonstrated how they store and maintain information on each placement provider once this information has been received from the IBMS each year. This condition is linked to conditions under SETs 5.4 and 5.5 of this report. The visitors therefore require further evidence that demonstrates that all practice placements have relevant skills, knowledge and experience.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that all practice educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: In documentation and meetings at the visit the visitors heard that placement educators have recently attended a 'Train the Trainer' session designed specifically to prepare placement educators for taking on students. The visitors reviewed the content of this training and were satisfied that it was appropriate to ensure that placement educators are prepared to take students. However, the visitors heard that the training is not currently compulsory for all placement educators. The visitors note the while the training is not compulsory they cannot be certain that all placement educators will undertake appropriate training. The programme team stated that where practice educators could not attend the 'Train the Trainer' session a visit would be made to the placement site to provide training in preparation for taking a student. However, the visitors were not provided with any evidence to support this, or, the content of this particular training. The visitors therefore require further information which demonstrates that practice educator training is compulsory for all placement educators, or, that adequate measures are in place to provide appropriate training for those who are unable to attend the 'Train the Trainer' sessions.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

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

Reason: Prior to the visit and in conversation with the programme team it was stated that all practice placements must be accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) before they can act as a practice placement for the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The visitors were satisfied that this was an appropriate requirement to ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, however, the visitors were unable to locate any information which demonstrates how UCLAN maintain ownership of the audit process. The programme team stated that they receive an email from IBMS each year to confirm which placements are approved and also receive updates via email should a placement have its accreditation revoked. However, the visitors were unable to see any evidence to support these statements. Furthermore the education provider stated that any emails are received by the

programme leader only, the visitors could not see how this information may be picked up in the programme leaders absence. In addition to this, the visitors note that the education provider has not demonstrated how they store and maintain information on each placement provider once this information has been received from the IBMS each year. This condition is linked to conditions under SETs 5.4 and 5.5 of this report. The visitors therefore require further evidence that demonstrates that all practice placement educators are appropriately registered.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for biomedical scientists.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were provided with a SOPs mapping document to demonstrate which learning outcomes on the programme ensure that students are able to meet the SOPs for biomedical scientists on successful completion of the programme. However, the education provider used the outdated SOPs for biomedical scientists in this mapping document. The visitors note that without seeing how the programme delivers the current SOPs for biomedical scientists they cannot see where the SOPs are assessed and consequently how the programme ensures that those who successfully complete the programme have met the standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide appropriate and up to date documentation which demonstrates how the SOPs are delivered and assessed throughout the programme to ensure that this standard is met.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must revisit module descriptor BL2223 to ensure that all learning outcomes are mapped to an appropriate assessment.

Reason: Prior to the visit the visitors were provided with module descriptors for each of the modules. Module descriptor BL2223 highlighted five learning outcomes in total, however, the visitors were unable to locate where learning outcomes four and five were assessed within the module. The programme team stated that learning outcomes four and five were assessed in this module but had been accidentally omitted from the module descriptor. The visitors note that without confirmation of the assessment method for learning outcomes four and five they cannot be certain that the assessment methods are appropriate to measure the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide addition evidence, such as an up to date an up to date module descriptor for BL2223, which demonstrates appropriate assessment methods for all leaning outcomes, including four and five.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider may wish to consider reviewing the module descriptors to accurately reflect attendance requirements.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied with the attendance requirements and communication to students and are therefore satisfied that this standard continues to be met. However, some module descriptors stated that “full attendance” is required as part of the assessment criteria. The programme team stated that attendance record was not a factor in considering a students’ grade for each module and would have no impact in this way. The visitors were satisfied with this response from the programme team, however, noted that there is a risk that the reference to attendance within some module descriptors’ assessment criteria could be misleading to students. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider revisits module descriptors to ensure they accurately reflect the assessment and any attendance criteria.

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