

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Anglia Ruskin University
Programme name	Diploma Higher Education Paramedic Studies
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	9 – 10 February 2017

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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 'paramedic' 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 25 May 2017. At the Committee meeting on 25 May 2017, 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 – 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 part of a joint event. The education provider reviewed the programme. The visit also considered the BSc Paramedic Science. The education provider and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit, this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. A separate report exists for the BSc Paramedic Studies. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decision on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Glyn Harding (Paramedic) Ian Hughes (Lay visitor) Penny Joyce (Operating department practitioner)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Niall Gooch
HCPC observer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	55 per cohort, 3 cohorts per year
First approved intake	February 2016
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2017
Chair	Anne Devlin (Anglia Ruskin University)
Secretary	Joanne Wood (Anglia Ruskin University)
Members of the joint panel	Esther Norton (Internal panel member) John Talbot (University of Hertfordshire) Emily Gibney (Internal panel member)

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as the documentation does not exist, due to the programme only having run for a short period of time.

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service users and carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval the visitors must be 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 ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 56 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 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 number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme 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

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that materials provided to prospective students make it clear that successful completion of the programme provides eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

Reason: This is a closed programme only accessible to staff from East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) and London Ambulance Service (LAS). The visitors noted that a flyer produced for prospective students at EEAS and LAS tells students that they will be able to register and work as a paramedic as soon as they graduate. This is not the case, as individuals that successfully complete the programme must apply for, and be granted, registration by the HCPC before they can work as a paramedic. Therefore, the visitors considered that this statement is potentially misleading and must be altered to make it clear that successful completion of the programme only provides eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC rather than providing automatic ability to work as a paramedic.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how their monitoring processes ensure that all students have the opportunity to complete the required number of supernumerary placement hours and hours with a paramedic practice placement educator.

Reason: From the documentation and conversations at the approval visit, the currently approved programme has 1100 hours of practice placements in the ambulance setting.

Students on the DipHE continue to work shifts as ambulance technicians during their studies. Following discussions with the student panel, the visitors noted that many of the existing cohort were finding it hard to complete the required placement hours. Some students reported that, due to operational demand, it was common for students on placement to be reassigned away from shifts that they would be able to 'count' towards their placement hours onto shifts where they would be working as part of their normal duties. The students noted that they routinely found it necessary to work overtime, or forego annual leave until the end of the year, in order to accumulate the necessary placement hours. It was also mentioned that ambulances have on occasion been manned with one paramedic and two students.

The education provider is seeking to reduce placement hours to 750, partly as a response to pressure on students being able to complete the required number of placement hours noted above. Under the revised requirements students will need to complete a total of 300 supernumerary hours and 360 hours being supervised by a paramedic practice placement educator. The visitors were satisfied that this change was appropriate. However, the visitors considered that there was a risk that practice placement providers, facing operational pressures, could use the reduction in the

required hours for the students as an opportunity to increase the number of hours for which they are rostered in their day jobs as ambulance technicians, with the result that the pressure on students' required placement hours does not decrease. Therefore, they require the education provider to demonstrate how they will ensure that students do not face difficulties in making up the necessary supernumerary and educator-supervised hours.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure that a strategy is in place to ensure that student learning is not disrupted by further issues around effective use of space by the programme.

Reason: From discussions with the students, the visitors noted that there had been a recurring problem with teaching sessions being disrupted by non-availability of rooms and other resources (for example, training manikins), due to double-booking. Subsequent discussion with the programme team established that they were aware of the issue and were taking steps to address it. For example, the programme leader was making use of programme planning software to better organise resources. The visitors were satisfied that this standard was met, but recommend that the education provider continue their work to prevent the particular problems around booking of rooms and resources from persisting.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should continue their work to involve service users and carers in a broader range of activities on the programme, and to recruit a more diverse range of service users and carers.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that service users and carers were involved with the programme. However, they noted that their involvement is limited to objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), where they act the part of patients. The visitors also noted that the service users and carers currently involved with the programmes come from only one organisation, and are not fully representative of the range of service users that paramedics may encounter in their practice. The visitors heard from the service users group co-ordinator that around 1,000 service users and carers were potentially available for involvement with programmes, and that there was a development plan to widen the involvement of service users and carers in both programmes. The visitors recommend that the education provider looks for ways to involve service users and carers in more parts of the programme, and that they seek to involve individuals from a more diverse range of backgrounds.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The education provider should work towards making a broader range of out-of-ambulance placements available to students, with a particular focus on community settings such as GP clinics and minor injuries units.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the standard is met. However, they noted during discussions about placements that there was a very strong focus on ambulance placements. Given the changing nature of paramedic practice, the visitors recommend that the education provider should seek to provide a wider range of out-of-ambulance placements that reflect the kind of settings in which students are likely to find themselves during their professional careers. They noted that the education provider is

already working towards this goal with the planned development of a provider-wide health placement unit.

Glyn Harding
Ian Hughes
Penny Joyce