

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	Aston University
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology)
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Hearing aid dispensers
<b>Date of visit</b>	21 – 22 May 2013

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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. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Hearing aid dispenser' 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 4 July 2013. At the Committee meeting on 4 July 2013, the programme was approved. 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

This visit was the result of the education provider amending their current provision. The education provider notified us they have closed the existing approved BSc (Hons) Audiology with Professional Training programme and will replace it with this new BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology) programme. Given the similarity between the approved programme and the new programme, it was agreed the approval of this programme would incorporate those who enrolled for the September 2012 cohort. Those students will be eligible to apply for registration upon successful completion of the programme. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether 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 of HCPC visitors and profession	Angela Duxbury (Therapeutic radiographer) Tim Pringle (Hearing aid dispenser)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	25
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2012
Chair	Trevor Knight (Aston University)
Secretary	Gillian Cook (Aston University)

## 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 programme is new and therefore does not exist. Visitors reviewed external examiner reports for the BSc (Hons) Audiology with Professional Training programme.

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"/>
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 approval, the visitors must be assured 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 their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 56 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining SET.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. 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 is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

## Condition

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure it is accurate and provides information about the HCPC, the career pathway for a hearing aid dispenser and the protected title status.

**Reason:** The visitors noted the documentation contained little information about the regulatory role of the HCPC, the implications of the protected title of hearing aid dispenser or details about the career of a hearing aid dispenser. The visitors considered it important that students be aware of hearing aid dispensing as a profession distinct from audiology as there are different regulatory requirements and different career routes although are similar in subject matter. The visitors also noted the references to the criminals convictions check are out of date. References to the criminal records bureau (CRB) check are made where this should now be referred to as the disclosure and barring service (DBS). To ensure the programme documentation effectively supports student learning the visitors require the programme team to revisit the programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure it is accurate and provides information about the HCPC, the career pathway for a hearing aid dispenser and the protected title status.

## Recommendations

### **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.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the education provider consider providing further information potential applicants about the profession of hearing aid dispensing including the potential career pathway, the regulatory requirements of registration and the implications of the protected title.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about the programme. The visitors noted the programme does not provide initial information about hearing aid dispensing as a profession separate from audiology for potential applicants to the programme. The visitors feel this would enhance decision making for potential applicants if they are fully aware of the careers this programme can lead to and the regulatory requirements of the profession. The visitors suggest some initial information online may provide a valuable resource for these potential applicants.

### **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 visitors recommend the education provider consider whether they can provide students with an independent sector placement experience.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied the number, duration and range of practice placements would support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes enabling students to be able to meet all standards of proficiency for hearing aid dispensers. They noted other programmes the education provider delivers have direct links into the independent, non-NHS, practice placement settings. The visitors feel by making these options available to these students it would enhance their understanding of hearing aid dispensing and provide them with an experience to use if seeking employment as a hearing aid dispenser after graduation. The visitors recommend the education provider consider whether they can use the links already existing for other programmes to provide students with an independent sector placement experience.

Angela Duxbury  
Tim Pringle