

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Birmingham City university
Programme name	MSc Dietetics
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Dietitian
Date of visit	31 May – 1 June 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 'dietitian' 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 24 August 2017. At the Committee meeting on 23 November 2017, 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

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. 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 part of a joint event. The professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The professional body 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 the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. 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 professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Susan Lennie (Dietitian) Valerie Maehle (Physiotherapist) Kathleen Taylor (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer	Jasmine Pokuaa Oduro-Bonsrah
Proposed student numbers	15 per cohort, one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2018
Chair	Lynn Fulford (Birmingham City University)
Secretary	Pauline Watkis (Birmingham City University) Eleanor Statham (Birmingham City University) Vicki McGrath (Birmingham City University)
Members of the joint panel	Nina Paterson (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists) Judith Lane (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists) Rosanna Hudson (British Dietetic Association) Pauline Douglas (British Dietetic Association) Jackie Bishop (British Dietetic Association)

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 the external examiner reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Health and Wellbeing and BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy programmes as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 11 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. 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 be approved. 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 clarify who will pay for the additional costs associated with the programme, and how this will be communicated to applicants.

Reason: During the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were made aware that students on this programme may have to cover any additional costs that are associated with undertaking practice placements. However, from the documentation provided, the visitors could not see where information about additional costs for students had been mentioned in the information for applicants. In particular they could not see where information about the costs associated with travel to placements and accommodation whilst on placement. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that applicants to this programme have all the information they require to make an informed choice about taking up a place on this programme. As such the education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how they let applicants know about the additional costs associated with the programme, in particular the additional cost associated with undertaking practice placements.

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how appropriate the criminal convictions checks are for international applicants and how these checks will be communicated to the applicants.

Reason: From the programme documentation, the programme website and discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that all students are required to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to commencing the programme. The visitors also noted that international applicants are informed that “the system used in the UK to undertake criminal records checks (DBS) is currently not able to conduct overseas criminal record checks. International applicants will need check or certificate of good conduct from their home/overseas country prior to acceptance the course”. The visitors, were unclear on what criteria the certificate of good conduct will be assessed against and whether this will be an appropriate way to determine whether international students would undertake a robust criminal convictions check before commencing on the programme. The visitors considered that appropriate criminal convictions checks were undertaken for UK citizens, but were unclear how the education provider would undertake appropriate criminal convictions checks for any international applicants. Therefore, the visitors require information to demonstrate how the education provider undertakes criminal conviction checks for all applicants, in particular international applicants and also demonstrate how they will communicate these checks to the international applicants.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that they will have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to various documents including the curriculum vitae for staff members in the faculty and the visiting lecturers. At the visit the education provider stated that they will be recruiting an additional full time member of staff for the programme. During the programme team meeting, the education provider mentioned that they plan to have this member of staff in place by October 2017, in time to get them prepared for the proposed January 2018 start. The visitors were also told in the programme meeting that while the responsibilities for delivering this programme will be shared between the programme leader and the new member of staff, how the responsibilities would be shared has yet to be determined. As such, the visitors were unclear of the recruitment process and criteria for a new member of staff, and how the education provider will ensure that there is a new member of staff in place prior to the programme starting. Because of this the visitors were unclear of the qualifications and experience that will be required of successful candidates, and are therefore unable to determine that the staff team would have the required range of experience to deliver an effective programme. As such, the visitors need further evidence to be assured there is a formal plan in place to recruit appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver an effective programme and that this standard can be met.

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that subject areas will be taught by staff with the specialist expertise and knowledge.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unable to determine if subject areas will be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. The documentation provided included staff CVs, and the visitors noted that only one member of programme team, who was the programme leader, was a dietician. In the documentation and at the visit, the education provider informed the visitors that they will be recruiting one more dietician and will also be using visiting lectures to deliver this programme. The visitors were also told that other members of the staff from other programmes, such as nutrition lecturers, will also deliver aspects of the programme. However, as the new member of staff has not been recruited, the visitors are unable to conclude whether this individual will have relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. The visitors will need to be assured that there will be a sufficient mix of skills, knowledge and experience to deliver this programme. Additionally, it is not clear to the visitors which member of staff will be responsible for each module. In order to determine that this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates that the staff who deliver the programme will have the relevant specialist knowledge and expertise to deliver an effective programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure that the learning resources provide students with the information they require to progress and achieve the relevant learning outcomes on this programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and the programme website, the visitors were made aware that students would be given the option to participate in the programme as service users for practical sessions. The visitors were directed to the 'guidelines concerning student's informed consent to participate in the development of professional skills' document and the visitors agreed that this document has the appropriate detail to enable students to give their informed consent for participating as service users throughout the programme. The visitors however noted on the programme website and in the programme specification that there is an implication that students can refuse to take part in practical sessions when practicing the skills on their student colleagues who are acting as service users. The programme website states that "If you do decline to participate, you will be able to learn through the observation of others and will have access to the teaching material through resources accessible through moodle, for example, video links of techniques in taking anthropometric measurements and patient consultations". The visitors note that it is vital for students to be able to take part in practical skills sessions as they need to practice the skills in order to become competent, safe and effective practitioners. At the visit the programme team explained that this statement was referring to students acting as service users and not as the ones who are practicing the skills on their colleagues, who are acting as service users. The visitors, note that the information provided on the website and the programme specification could be misleading to students as there is an implication that students will not be expected to fulfil their practical competencies, not through practice but through other resources such as video links.

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that there are arrangements in place to secure practice placements for all students.

Reason: to evidence this standard the visitors were directed to various documents including the student course guide and stakeholder consultation notes between potential practice placement providers and the education provider. The visitors, however, could not see in the documentation provided whether there were any formal arrangements in place to secure practice placements for all students. During the programme team meeting the education provider identified a number of partner organisations. Furthermore, in the practice placement meeting the providers told the visitors that they were committed to being able to provide placements for this programme but were currently not clear on how much capacity they have. The education provider told the visitors that they have had verbal commitments from the placement providers to take students from this programme. However, from the evidence provided, they are unsure what guarantees the education provider has, and can give, that there will be placements in place for all students who undertake this programme. In particular the visitors note that without any formal agreements in place, they were unable to determine how the education provider could ensure that the practice placements will be integral to the programme for all students. The education provider therefore needs to provide evidence of the arrangements in place which ensure that

there will be practice placements provided for all students who undertake this programme.

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 clearly outline the range of practice placements that will be available to students on this programme and how they are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes

Reason: From the documentation, the visitors could see that the education provider aspires to offer students on this programme a range of practice placement experiences throughout their period of study. These placements would be available to students at both NHS and Non-NHS (private, voluntary and independent) settings. At the visit, the visitors met representatives from a number NHS placement providers and an independent provider. However, in these discussions, the visitors were informed that there was currently only one dietitian at this potential independent placement provider, so only one student would be at this provider at a time. It was also the case that, from the evidence provided, the visitors were unclear on what range of placements in NHS settings or otherwise, would be offered to students, how they would be offered and what range each student could expect to experience. The visitors are therefore unsure what the range of placements will be, how they will support the delivery of the programme and how they will ensure that students can achieve the related learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require further evidence which clearly outlines the range of placements available for this programme. This evidence should also outline what range of experience each student can expect and how this range of placements are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placements and why that number is appropriate to support students.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that there were no formal agreements to secure practice placements for all students. At the visit the programme, senior team and practice placement providers told the visitors that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting before the programme commences. From the conversations, the visitors note that there is effective communication and collaboration between the education provider and placement providers. However, throughout these meetings the visitors learnt that while there are verbal guarantees there are no formal arrangements to ensure that there will be sufficient practice placements for all students on this programme. Therefore the visitors could not see what the education provider considers an adequate number of staff that must be in place to support students at any practice placement provider. They could also not see how the education provider will ensure that the adequate number of staff will be in place at each practice placement setting.

Therefore, the visitors require evidence to demonstrate that there will be a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;
- expectations of professional conduct;
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure students are prepared for placements, having not passed their assessments of their theoretical work before they go out on placements.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors noted that prior to students undertaking placements they will have undertaken a number of modules and assessments designed to prepare them for placement. However, the visitors also noted that students may be able to move on to their placements, having failed the theoretical assessment that are in place to prepare them for that placement. Therefore the visitors were unclear on how the programme team will ensure that all students have the appropriate knowledge to practice safely and effectively whilst on their practice placements. In particular the visitors could not see how, if students who passed the modules had appropriate levels of consolidated knowledge between theory and practice, students who have failed the theoretical assessments will similarly be prepared for placements. The education provider must, therefore, provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure that all students are fully prepared through the appropriate theoretical knowledge before they go out on placement to ensure that they practice safely and effectively.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment methods employed measure the learning outcomes

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to various documents including the module guides, standard post graduate regulations and programme specification. Following a review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear on how some of the assessment methods adopted will enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and their ability to practice. The visitors could not see how the assessment methods (for example in the 'prevention and intervention in dietetic practice 2' and 'foundations of dietetic practice' modules) will appropriately measure the learning outcomes outlined in those modules. For the prevention and intervention in dietetic practice 2 module students will have to undertake a 1 hour 30 minute exam, where they will have to critically analyse three case studies and be "expected to translate the critical interpretation of the evidence base into practical dietetic management plans and public health strategies, supported by clinical reasoning and a justified approach to evaluation". According to the education provider this assessment method is adopted to address the four learning outcomes outlined in the module guide. The visitors could not

see how this assessment method will ensure that students successfully achieve the learning outcomes such as being able to “critically analyse the information required to undertake a comprehensive dietetic assessment of individuals with a range of clinical conditions, in a variety of clinical settings” for example.

Furthermore, for the foundations of dietetic practice module, students are summatively assessed on a 1000-word written case report with a 5-minute supporting presentation. Again, with the assessment of this module the visitors could not see how the students would be able to demonstrate their scope and depth of knowledge in order to fulfil the learning outcomes and therefore achieve the standards of proficiency for dietitians. The visitors could not see how the assessment methods chosen, in particular for the two modules mentioned would appropriately measure the learning outcomes. The education provider therefore, must provide evidence to demonstrate how the assessment methods employed appropriate measures the learning outcomes of the programme.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must communicate any changes to the assessment regulations, and demonstrate that it clearly specifies the requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Reason: In reviewing the documentation the visitors noted the assessment regulations which specifies the requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme. However, during the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were told that the number of resit attempts for students will be changed as part of the wider university regulations. As such, the visitors have not had the evidence of the final, confirmed, assessment regulations for the programme or how students will be made aware of the changes. The visitors will therefore require the education provider to provide additional evidence which outlines the revised and updated assessment regulations. This additional evidence should also demonstrate how the assessment regulations, particularly information about the number of resit attempts, will be communicated to students. In this way the visitors can make determinations about how the programme can meet this standard.

Recommendations

3.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how best to support the programme leader in their role to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided and discussions at the visit, it was clear that there is a named person who has overall responsibility for the programme. The education provider also told the visitors that all new members of staff are mentored by experienced members of staff in the university. The visitors were therefore, satisfied that this standard was met. However, the visitors noted that the programme leader has limited experience in programme management and that there would not be another permanent member of the programme team recruited until the autumn of 2017. The visitors also noted the multifaceted management role the programme lead will have. As the programme leader is new to programme management the visitors recommend, that the education provider considers the current level of support for the programme leader, especially as they are currently the only person with responsibility over all aspects of the programme.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the assessment strategy and design to ensure that it is consistent in how students achieve the learning outcomes.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to various documents including the module guides, standard post graduate regulations and programme specification. The visitors recommend that as part of meeting the condition set under standard 6.4, the education provider should consider reviewing the assessment strategy and design to ensure that it is consistent. The assessment of some modules such as the foundations of dietetic practice and prevention and intervention in dietetic practice 2 modules seem to be inconsistent with the assessment of other modules, especially as they have the same credit bearings. For example, the summative assessment of the food science, food skills and applied nutrition module is a 2500-word menu redesign with nutritional analysis and rationale as well as a 500-word leaflet “providing practical advice on adapting the menu to meet an identified dietary need”. Whilst, the assessment of the foundations of dietetic practice module is a 1000-word written case report with a 5-minute supporting presentation. The education provider should therefore consider reviewing the appropriateness of the assessment strategy and design to ensure that it is consistent and effective in measuring the learning outcomes, to ensure that students meet the standards of proficiency for dietitians upon successful completion.

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