Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Birmingham Metropolitan College
Validating body / Awarding body	University of Wolverhampton
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Podiatry
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Chiropodist / podiatrist
Relevant entitlements	Local anaesthetic Prescription only medicine
Date of visit	28 – 29 April 2015

Contents

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 'chiropodist' or 'podiatrist' 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 27 August 2015. At the Committee meeting, 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 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 he programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The education provider, 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. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	James Pickard (Chiropodist / podiatrist) Ian Prince (Lay visitor) Catherine Smith (Chiropodist / podiatrist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
HCPC observer	Jo Mussen
Proposed student numbers	25 per cohort, per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2015
Chair	Ruth Shiner (University of Wolverhampton)
Secretary	Rebecca Bates (University of Wolverhampton)
Members of the joint panel	Sharon Arkell (Internal panel member) Laura Clode (Internal panel member) Alison Felce (Internal panel Member) Gill Conde (Internal panel member) Wilfred Foxe (The College of Podiatry) Mairgread Ellis (The College of Podiatry) Michelle Spruce (The College of Podiatry)

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 HCPC did not review external examiners' reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new. However, the visitors did review external examiners' reports for the current BSc (Hons) Podiatry validated by Aston University.

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)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Podiatry validated by Aston University 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 52 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining six 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

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit programme documentation to ensure consistency and accuracy in line with statutory regulation.

Reason: Throughout the programme documentation, the visitors noted a number of inaccuracies. For example, page 165 of the Course Documents states "Attendance of 100% is compulsory at all clinical classes. This is a HCPC professional body requirement." This is incorrect as HCPC does not prescribe the required attendance for a programme. This statement also references the HCPC as a professional body, the HCPC is not a professional body we are a regulatory body.

The visitors also noted that page 4 of the Programme Documentation states "Successful completion of the programme will make you eligible to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)" This is incorrect as, upon approval, successful completion of the programme will make students eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC, subject to further scrutiny.

The visitors also noted other inaccuracies within the documentation. The visitors note that this inaccuracy in information could me misleading to students in their understanding of the HCPC role and remit. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit all programme documentation to ensure consistency and accuracy in line with statutory regulation.

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the availability of library resources appropriately supports students on the programme.

Reason: At the visit, the visitors were taken on a tour of the facilities which included visiting the library at the Matthew Boulton site of Birmingham Metropolitan College. The visitors noted that the space they visited was small and had a limited number of study areas available to students. In addition to this, in a meeting with students, it was voiced that they felt there were not enough learning spaces or library resources, particularly journals. It was felt that the library was noisy and therefore not an appropriate place to study. Students also stated that they had instead studied at home and purchased books personally. In a meeting with the programme team, the visitors heard that library resources and journal access would be increasing with the newly formed relationship with Wolverhampton University, however this was not yet in place. From the tour of facilities and statements made in meetings with students and the programme team, the visitors were unable to see how the resources available to students married up with the requirements of the programme. The visitors therefore require further information on the library resources available to students comparative to the requirements of the programme. In this way the visitors can ensure that appropriate learning resources are readily available to students on the programme.

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 revisit the consent form signed by students prior to taking part in any clinical teaching to ensure students are giving informed consent.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to the clinical teaching consent form which states "I agree to take part in the pre-clinical teaching sessions in order to understand and practice clinical podiatric care and management". This visitors noted that there were no details provided on what 'take part' was to include and therefore noted that this was not informed consent. Further to this, in a meeting with students, it was stated that students could remember signing a consent form but were not sure what for. The visitors were satisfied that the consent was being signed by students, but again note that this was not informed consent. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit the student consent form to ensure that consent given prior to taking part in clinical teaching is informed consent.

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 clearly articulate the learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect the following standard of proficiency (SOP) with specific reference to the access and supply of prescription only medicines. This will ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs for their part of the register.

14.11 be able to carry out the following techniques safely and effectively:

 – administer relevant prescription-only medicines, interpret any relevant pharmacological history and recognise potential consequences for patient treatment

– apply local anaesthesia techniques

– carry out mechanical debridement of intact and ulcerated skin

– carry out surgical procedures for skin and nail conditions

– make and use chair-side foot orthoses

– manage nail disorders

– prescribe foot orthoses

– use appropriate physical and chemical therapies

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors were unable to locate, where in the curriculum, the above mentioned SOP is addressed. Specifically, the visitors could not locate where students would be taught how to interpret any relevant pharmacological history and recognise potential consequences for patient treatment when safely and effectively administering relevant prescription-only medicines available on exemptions. Further to this, in a meeting with students the visitors heard

that students were not confident in the delivery of access and supply of prescription only medicines. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to clearly articulate where the above SOP is delivered, specifically in relation to the access and supply of prescription only medicines available on exemptions. In this way the visitors can ensure that those who complete the programme are safe and effective practitioners.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that all practice educators have attended and continue to attend practice educator training.

Reason: The visitors heard that practice educators have a number of opportunities within Birmingham Metropolitan College to undertake practice educator training as well as other further education courses. It was also stated that regular training sessions are run for practice educators at placement sites. However, the visitors were unable to identify any formal mechanisms in place to monitor the attendance of practice educators at these training sessions. In a meeting with the programme team, it was sated that there was no formal mechanism in place. The visitors note that without seeing a formal monitoring mechanism, they cannot be sure that all practice educators are, and will continue to be, appropriately trained in their role. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence which shows how they will monitor the attendance of practice educators to initial and refresher training sessions.

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 clearly articulate the assessment of learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect the following standard of proficiency (SOP) with specific reference to the access and supply of prescription only medicines. This will ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs for their part of the register.

14.11 be able to carry out the following techniques safely and effectively:

 – administer relevant prescription-only medicines, interpret any relevant pharmacological history and recognise potential consequences for patient treatment

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Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revisiting staff numbers and individual workloads.

Reason: The visitors could see that the current staff numbers on the programme were adequate to deliver the programme effectively and were therefore satisfied that this standard is met at threshold level. However, through meetings with students and the programme team it became apparent that the programme team had particularly large workloads. The visitors heard that there was no designated administrator for the programme so all administrative tasks were shared amongst the teaching staff on the programme. In particular it was stated that one member of staff had worked an additional 37 hours in one month, on top of their contracted hours. In addition to this the visitors heard that there are a number of changes being implemented with the recent change of validating body to Wolverhampton University. The visitors noted that the stated changes would be enhancements to the programme and were likely to be more demanding of staff time. If the requirements of staff time increases, the visitors note there is a risk that the programme will not continue to be effectively delivered and therefore a risk of this standard falling below threshold level. The visitors therefore recommend the programme team revisits staffing numbers for the programme and their individual workloads.

4.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the programme team reconsiders when academic writing skills are taught on the programme.

Reason: The visitors could see that academic writing is taught at points throughout the curriculum and are therefore satisfied that this standard is met at threshold level. However, the visitors noted that the first sessions which specifically addressed academic writing skills were late into year one. The visitors also heard from students that they had handed in two written assignments before attending a session on academic writing. The students felt that this would have benefited them much more had they received the support before handing in their first assignment. The visitors note introducing this session after assignments have been handed in poses a risk to the demonstration of autonomous and reflective thinking of students in the first half of year 1 on the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team revisits the timing of this session to better support students in autonomous and reflective thinking in their written assignments.

James Pickard
Ian Prince
Catherine Smith