

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	British Psychological Society
Programme name	Qualification in Forensic Psychology
Mode of delivery	Flexible
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Forensic psychologist
Date of visit	22 - 23 June 2010

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Practitioner psychologist' or 'Forensic psychologist' must be registered with us. The HPC keep a register of health 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 9 December 2010. At the Committee meeting on 9 December 2010, 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 HPC visited the programme at the education provider as the Practitioner psychologist profession came onto the register in July 2009 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. 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 HPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	George Delafield (Forensic psychologist) Linda Mutema (Radiographer)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Brendon Edmonds
Proposed student numbers	475 (rolling cohort)
Initial approval	1 January 2001
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Neil Coulson (University of Nottingham)
Secretary	Meetings recorded
Members of the joint panel	Mark Forshaw (Observer, British Psychological Society)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC 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 HPC did not review External Examiner's reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner for the programme.

During the visit the HPC 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not see specialist teaching accommodation as the nature of the qualification does not require any specialist laboratories or teaching rooms.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing 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 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 42 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 15 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing 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 ongoing 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.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

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 redraft the programme documentation to include the information overseas applicants require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Reason: The programme team informed the visitors that overseas applicants could apply to the programme. However, the visitors noted the programme documentation made little reference to overseas applicants. In particular the documentation did not advise overseas applicants of the requirements to be eligible to apply to the programme.

In light of this information, the visitors were not satisfied overseas applicants were given the information they required to make an informed choice about whether they could apply to the programme. The visitors require any programme documentation (including website information) be updated to include all the information overseas applicants need before applying to programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must redraft the programme documentation to clearly articulate the requirements overseas applicants must meet for criminal conviction checks.

Reason: The programme team informed the visitors that overseas applicants could apply to the programme. However, the visitors noted the programme documentation made little reference to overseas applicants. In particular the documentation did not advise overseas applicants (only UK applicants) of the requirements to produce evidence of a criminal conviction check upon application to the programme. Furthermore, applicants were given no guidance as to the level of check required and how this relates to the equivalent check undertaken within the UK.

Therefore, the visitors were not satisfied overseas applicants to the programme were fully aware of the requirements of producing evidence of a criminal convictions check. The visitors require any programme documentation (including website information) be updated to include information for overseas applicants about the requirements for a criminal convictions check. Any information should also provide guidance to overseas applicants regarding the level of check required for entry to the programme.

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must redraft the programme documentation to clearly articulate the academic and professional entry standards which apply to overseas applicants.

Reason: The programme team informed the visitors that overseas applicants could apply to the programme. However, the visitors noted the programme documentation made little reference to overseas applicants. In particular the documentation did not advise overseas applicants of the academic and professional entry standards required for entry onto the programme and if these differ from UK applicants.

The visitors were not satisfied overseas applicants were fully aware of the academic and professional entry standards they needed to meet when applying for admission to the programme. The visitors require any programme documentation (including website information) be updated to include information for overseas applicants about the academic and professional entry standards applied at admission to the programme.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the systems in place to effectively manage the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation articulated the programme structure and the various roles which are fulfilled to deliver the programme. At the visit itself, the visitors met with the programme team and coordinating supervisors to further discuss the management of the programme. Although the visitors were satisfied there were adequate numbers of staff and professionals in place to deliver the programme, they were not satisfied that the systems in place adequately supported all aspects of the delivery of the programme.

In particular the visitors noted the education provider had limited systems for formal evaluation of the programme. Feedback was sought through online surveys from trainees, placement providers and coordinating supervisors, however participation in such surveys is optional. Trainees had the opportunity to participate in an annual survey. Opportunities for informal feedback were also made available at training sessions and conferences. Informal feedback could also be submitted at anytime to the programme team by email and phone. The visitors were not satisfied these systems provided adequate opportunities for formal evaluation and feedback. The visitors also noted there was no system in place to formally and regularly assess the performance of individuals performing in the various roles within the management of the programme. These roles include the Programme Leader, Registrar, Co-ordinating Supervisors, Designated Supervisors and Assessors.

The visitors therefore require these areas of the management of the programme to be addressed. Further information of these areas are articulated in conditions for standards 3.3, 3.7 which are detailed further on in this report.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place for the programme.

Reason: The visitors evidenced the current systems in place to monitor and evaluate the programme from the documentation provided and also from meetings with various groups at the visit. In particular, the visitors noted trainee and coordinating supervisor feedback was sought through the completion of optional online feedback. Trainees also had the opportunity to participate in an annual survey. Informal feedback was also sought from Coordinating Supervisors as part of training.

In light of these systems the visitors were not satisfied the systems in place provided sufficient evidence of regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Furthermore the visitors were not satisfied the systems in place include mechanisms to act on any information gathered. The visitors noted the current systems in place are dependent on trainees and Coordinating Supervisors voluntarily engaging with these processes. Although useful, the visitors require the education provider to develop regular formal systems to engage these groups more frequently than on an annual or bi-annual basis. Furthermore, the visitors require further evidence of how information gathered from the current and future systems is consolidated into clear action plans with appropriate timeframes and resources allocated.

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the systems in place to assess the performance of staff and professionals across the various roles used to deliver the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted the various roles fulfilled by staff and professionals to deliver the programme. These roles include that of Programme Leader, Registrar, Coordinating Supervisor, Designated Supervisor and Assessor. The visitors were also provided with criteria outlining the responsibilities and duties to be performed in each role. However, the visitors were not provided with evidence of how individuals are assessed for their performance in these roles.

The visitors were not satisfied adequate systems were in place to assess the performance of individuals in the various roles and therefore were not satisfied this standard is met. The visitors require further evidence of the systems in place to conduct regular staff/professional appraisals across all the roles fulfilled on the programme. Any system must articulate how appraisals are conducted, the

criteria used to make assessments, the frequency for conducting appraisals and how any issues arising from the appraisals are managed.

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of an audit used to approve and monitor placements which ensures the provision of a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: The visitors noted Coordinating Supervisors were responsible to ensure placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment. In particular the Coordinating Supervisor Handbook encourages supervisors to undertake a risk assessment prior to approving a placement, however this is not a mandatory requirement. The visitors were not provided with any evidence of systems which ensure an audit of placement settings, addressing the provision of safe and supportive environments, are always conducted prior to and throughout the duration of a placement. In light of this information the visitors were not satisfied this standard was met.

The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures each placement site provides a safe and supportive environment. In particular, any evidence should address how an audit is used to conduct a risk assessment of each placement site, and a placement induction, and how trainees are made aware about risks and safety issues. An audit tool should also address how a record of these activities is maintained and provided to the education provider and how any issues identified are addressed by the education provider and placement provider.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the system used to approve and monitor placement environments.

Reason: The visitors noted through the programme documentation the Coordinating Supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that each placement will provide an appropriate learning experience. In particular, the Coordinating Supervisors Handbook outlines the considerations each supervisor should make when approving a placement. However there was no evidence to demonstrate these considerations were always addressed prior to and throughout the duration of every placement. At the visit, the programme team acknowledged there was no system in place which allowed the education provider to maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements. The visitors were not provided with any evidence of an audit used by the Coordinating Supervisors to approve each placement site and any systems in place to effectively monitor them.

The visitors require further evidence of the system used to approve each placement site and how that system ensures ongoing monitoring is conducted.

In particular any evidence should address how an audit is linked to any policies and processes for approving placements, how an audit is used to approve placement sites, how an audit is used to continually monitor the quality of the placement, how this information is recorded and how any issues arising are managed and inform the development of processes. The system should also address how a record of these audit activities is maintained and provided to the education provider.

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 further evidence of a system used to approve and monitor placement environments which ensures equality and diversity policies are in place, implemented and regularly monitored.

Reason: The visitors noted Coordinating Supervisors were responsible to ensure placement settings have equality and diversity policies in place. In particular the Coordinating Supervisor Handbook encourages supervisors to ensure equality and diversity policies are in place and regularly monitored by the placement provider. The visitors were not provided with any evidence of systems which ensure an audit of placement settings, addressing equality and diversity policies, are always conducted prior to and throughout the duration of a placement and a record of such audits are maintained. In light of this information the visitors were not satisfied this standard was met.

The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures each placement site has equality and diversity policies in place which are regularly monitored. In particular, any evidence should address how an audit is used ensure equality and diversity are in place and monitored. An audit should also address how a record of these activities is maintained and provided to the education provider and how any issues identified are addressed.

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 further evidence of the system used to ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Reason: The visitors noted the Coordinating Supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that each placement will provide an appropriate learning experience. In particular the Coordinating Supervisor handbook encourages supervisors to ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of the trainee. The visitors were not provided with any evidence of systems which ensure an audit of placement settings, addressing adequate numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, are always conducted prior to and throughout the duration of a placement and a record of such audits are maintained. In light of this information the visitors were not satisfied this standard was met.

The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures each placement site has an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting. In particular, any evidence should address how an audit is used to check the trainees learning will appropriately supported by the staff at the placement. An audit should also address how a record of these activities is maintained and provided to the education provider and how any issues identified are addressed.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the system used to ensure practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: The visitors noted the Coordinating Supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that each placement will provide an appropriate learning experience. In particular the Coordinating Supervisor Handbook encourages supervisors to ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of the trainee. The visitors were not provided with any evidence of systems which ensure an audit of placement settings, addressing the knowledge, skills and experience of placement educators, are always conducted prior to and throughout the duration of a placement and records of such audits are maintained. In light of this information the visitors were not satisfied this standard was met.

The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. In particular, any evidence should address how an audit is used to check the trainees learning will be appropriately supported by the staff at the placement. An audit should also address how a record of these activities is maintained and provided to the education provider and how any issues identified are addressed.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the system used to ensure all coordinating supervisors undertake appropriate practice placement education training.

Reason: The visitors noted through the programme documentation and through meetings at the visit that the education provider conducted introductory training sessions for Coordinating Supervisors. However these training sessions were not mandatory and therefore not all supervisors undertook the training prior to working with a trainee. The visitors did not receive evidence to indicate refresher sessions were conducted.

In order to be satisfied the standard is met, the visitors require the programme team to provide further evidence articulating the requirement for coordinator

supervisor training to be mandatory. In particular, any evidence submitted should detail how this training is to be conducted, the frequency with which it will be mandatory for coordinating supervisors to attend and also the implications for supervisors who do not undergo refresher training.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the system used to ensure practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The visitors noted the Coordinating Supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that each placement will provide an appropriate learning experience. In particular the Coordinating Supervisor Handbook encourages supervisors to ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of the trainee. The visitors were not provided with any evidence of systems which ensure an audit of placement settings, addressing the HPC registration of placement educators, are always conducted prior to and throughout the duration of a placement and a record of such audits are maintained. In light of this information the visitors were not satisfied this standard was met.

The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed. In particular an audit should also address how a record of these activities is maintained and provided to the education provider and how any issues identified are addressed.

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the systems in place to ensure there is regular, effective collaboration between the education provider and the placement provider.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation and through the various meetings at the visit, collaboration between the placement providers and the education provider relied heavily upon the role of the Coordinating Supervisor. Trainees are required to submit a quarterly supervision plan to the education provider which involves input from both the trainee and the Coordinating Supervisor. However communication directly between the education provider and the Coordinating Supervisors was not recorded formally. There was no formal system in place to ensure regular contact was maintained, and regular audits of placement sites were not conducted.

In light of this information, the visitors are not satisfied a system was in place to provide regular, recorded collaboration between the education provider and practice placement environments. Any further evidence should detail how staff on the programme maintain regular contact with placement providers. In particular, the system should detail how contact provides a channel for regular

communication directly between the placement site and the education provider to allow for feedback on the trainee's progression or on the programme planning and design. The system should also address how a record of this communication is maintained by education provider and how any issues highlighted from the system are actioned.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the appointment of an external examiner who is appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, from the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors noted the appointment of an external examiner to the programme was currently being advertised. In order to be satisfied this standard is met, the visitors require evidence of the appointment of the external examiner. In particular the visitors require evidence to be satisfied the external examiner is appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, from the relevant part of the Register. The visitors also require the programme regulations be updated to indicate an external examiner, meeting the details of this standard, is in place for the programme.

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 education provider should consider revising the programme documentation to further clarify the roles and responsibilities of the BPS, the placement provider and the trainee on the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation contained information for trainees and prospective trainees regarding enrolling and commencing on the programme. The feedback from trainees at the visit indicated they did not completely understand the responsibilities of the BPS and placement provider in relation to their progression on the programme. The visitors were satisfied the documentation provided trainees with the information they required to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme.

However the visitors recommend the education provider consider revising the programme documentation to clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of the BPS, the placement provider and trainee on the programme. Such clarification could assist all applicants to completely understand the nature of the programme and the responsibilities of the BPS, placement provider and trainee.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revising the programme documentation to refer trainees to the HPC's guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation referred to the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors were satisfied the standard was met and that the programme design made sure trainees understood the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

However, the visitors recommend the education provider consider revising the programme documentation to reference the HPC's guidance on conduct and ethics for students. The visitors deemed reference made to this guidance would further assist trainees' understanding of issues of conduct and ethics whilst completing the programme.

George Delafield
Linda Mutema