

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	British Psychological Society
Programme name	Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (Stage 2)
Mode of delivery	Flexible
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Sport and Exercise psychologist
Date of visit	13 – 14 January 2011

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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 'Sport and Exercise 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 31 March 2011. At the Committee meeting on 9 June 2011, 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 psychology 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	David Packwood (Counselling psychologist) Sandy Wolfson (Sport and Exercise psychologist)
HPC executive officer	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	75 (rolling cohort)
Initial approval	1 January 2008
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	
Chair	Paul Hitchings (British Psychological Society)
Secretary	Meetings recorded
Members of the joint panel	Pamela James (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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 the learning resources or 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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 52 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 5 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.

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 revisit all programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that potential applicants are made aware of any likely additional costs associated with the programme and that they can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted that students may be expected to self-fund a number of additional costs associated with taking up a place on the programme. The visitors noted that the course fees were clearly stated on the programme website. However reference to other potential additional costs such as those associated with annual supervisor fees; costs associated with access to electronic journals, costs associated with indemnity insurance; costs associated with travel to placements and supervisor meetings and costs associated with CRB checks were less clearly stated. The visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure that, as with the course fees, the potential additional costs associated with the programme are clearly stated to demonstrate that this standard has been met.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that resources are available to support student learning in all settings and that they effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the students the visitors noted that students are required to evidence the use of journal articles in order to undertake the required learning and assessment on the programme. However, the visitors noted that the education provider does not currently offer this provision to students. The visitors articulated that this lack of resource could affect some students' ability to achieve the required learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to demonstrate how and when they intend to offer all students access to journals. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard has been met.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must identify where in the programme attendance is mandatory and must demonstrate associated monitoring mechanisms to evidence the time students have spent on placement.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team, students and practice placement educators the visitors noted that student attendance on placements is not formally monitored and that no formal monitoring mechanism is in place to assist practice placement educators in monitoring attendance. The visitors highlighted that this lack of monitoring could impact on the programme team's ability to ensure that all of the standards of proficiency can be met. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence of a formal monitoring mechanism to ensure that student attendance is monitored in all placement settings. This should evidence the time students spend in a practice placement setting and ensure that students can meet the relevant standards of proficiency.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the curriculum ensures that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors note some reference to the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. However they were unable to find evidence to clearly outline where the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics are referred to in the curriculum and how the education provider ensures that students understand these standards, including how and where they apply. The visitors therefore require additional evidence to identify how the programme team ensure that students on the programme understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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

Condition: The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for monitoring placements.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team the visitors are satisfied that the programme has a thorough and effective system for approving placements. The visitors did note however that the programme is lacking a thorough and effective system for monitoring placements. The visitors require the education provider to provide evidence of a mechanism that allows students and supervisors to inform the education providers of any changes to the approved placement provision. The visitors require evidence of a robust mechanism that will allow the education provider to continually monitor all placements and evidence that this mechanism will be clearly communicated to students and supervisors.

Recommendations

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that as well as the current pastoral relationships between supervisor and student, students are offered an additional source of pastoral support.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied that this standard is met; however, they did note that supervisors play a key role in offering students pastoral support and that this arrangement relies on a positive relationship between the supervisor and student. The visitors recommend that students should be given access to another named person from whom they can seek advice if they don't feel able to speak to their supervisor about pastoral issues. The visitors suggest that this could come from part of a supervisory network, a designated person from the education provider or even someone from outside of the profession.

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the student complaints process is reviewed to ensure that it is accessible and appropriate.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied that this standard is met; however, after a review of the documentation they did note that the only documented mechanism for a student to make a complaint is to make a formal complaint in writing to the education provider. The visitors felt that this could potentially prevent some students from making a complaint because of its formal nature. From discussions with the programme team it was noted that students often phone the programme team directly and are able to raise any concerns they may have. The visitors recommend reviewing the complaints process to make it more accessible to students on the programme.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider continues to work toward more peer support mechanisms such as discussion groups.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. The visitors noted from discussions with students that undertaking the programme of learning relied on the students' ability to undertake independent and autonomous study. The visitors also noted that the supervisor and student relationship is crucial as it ensures that students develop autonomous and reflective thinking. The visitors recommend that the programme team continues to encourage autonomous and reflective thinking through the mechanisms it already adopts but also considers developing new strategies to encourage more peer support mechanisms such as discussion groups.

Sandy Wolfson