hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Cardiff University
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	21 – 22 October 2010

Contents

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 'Clinical 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 16 February 2011. At the Committee meeting on 16 February 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 part of a joint event as the professional body also considered their accreditation of the programme. The professional body and the HPC 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 HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Sabiha Azmi (Clinical psychologist)
	Peter Branston (Educational psychologist)
HPC executive officer	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	10
Initial approval	1 January 1993
Chair	David Lloyd (Cardiff University)
Secretary	Karen Moore (Cardiff University)
Members of the joint panel	Lucy Kerry (British Psychological Society)
	Helen Dent (British Psychological Society)
	Gundi Kiemle (British Psychological Society)
	Lorna Farquharson (British Psychological Society)
	Matthias Schwannauer (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	☒	☐	☐
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	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and 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.
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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 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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 recommendation 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

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation and produce clear policies and procedures to support the approval and monitoring of new placements.

Reason: From the documents submitted and from discussions with the programme team the visitors did not have enough evidence to demonstrate that the education provider has a thorough and effective system in place for the approval and monitoring of new placements. The visitors noted that the education provider does have mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of placements and does audit placements; however they noted that these approval and monitoring mechanisms are retrospective and potentially allowed trainees to go in to a new placement setting without it being formally approved by the education provider. The visitors require the education provider to produce evidence as to how they ensure that all new placements are audited before a trainee goes on to placement to demonstrate that the education provider is responsible for the learning outcomes to be delivered on practice placements..

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

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate the mechanism they use to ensure that practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training in advance of receiving trainees and how they decide when practice placement educators require refresher training.

Reason: From the documents submitted and from discussions with the programme team and trainees the visitors noted that the education provider does offer practice placement educator training to practice placement educators. However, from discussions with the trainees the visitors noted that not all practice placement educators had received practice placement educator training. The programme team confirmed to the visitors that practice placement educator training was not mandatory. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that all practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training in advance of receiving trainees. The visitors require clarification on how the education provider records and monitors the training of new practice placement educators and information on how it is determined if a practice placement educator needs refresher training and how this is articulated to the relevant parties. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to ensure consistency with the university assessment regulations.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from a review of the university assessment regulations the visitors noted a number of disparities. The visitors require the programme documentation to be consistent with the university assessment regulations so that trainees understand what is expected of them at each stage of the programme and that trainees are clear about what is expected of them in terms of progression and achievement within the programme. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met and that trainees are clear about what constitutes a failure on the programme.

Recommendations

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Recommendation The education provider should consider forming an outline or action plan to demonstrate how the programme team's strategies for widening access to the profession of clinical psychology will be implemented.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the senior management and the programme team the visitors noted evidence of an equality and diversity policy and evidence of the education provider implementing and monitoring this policy. The visitors were happy that the requirements of the HPC relating to this standard were being met. The visitors did however note that the programme team had produced a document called *Review of programme strategies for widening access to the profession of clinical psychology*. The education provider should consider outlining how the strategies identified by the programme team will be implemented in an outline or action plan to demonstrate the implementation of these strategies.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revisiting the structures and support mechanisms that are in place to encourage trainees to provide honest and critical feedback about the programme and practice placements.

Reason: From the documentation and from discussions at the visit the visitors were happy that the requirements of the HPC relating to this standard were being met. The visitors did however note a number of points that came up in the meeting with the trainees. Some trainees expressed concern that they did not always feel comfortable offering critical feedback to the course team and that the structures and support mechanisms in place did not always allow them to do this. Some trainees also perceived that feedback from trainees and practice placement educators were not always responded to by the programme team in an equitable way. The visitors recommend that the programme team may want to revisit the mechanisms it uses to gain feedback from trainees and review the way in which the programme team responds to this feedback to ensure that the process is transparent, equitable and that trainees feel that feedback has been listened and responded to.

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Recommendation The education provider should consider working towards more formal arrangements with practice placements.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team and senior management the visitors noted that the education provider does not have formal arrangements in place with practice

placement providers. After discussions with the senior management team the visitors noted that trainee numbers are commissioned annually from NHS Wales. The visitors recommend the education provider engages in discussions at a strategic level with commissioners and practice placement providers to work towards more formal arrangements, to ensure the quality and consistency of placement provision across all settings.

6.3 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider offering trainees additional support to ensure that trainees are able to effectively give and receive feedback both within the programme but also in practice.

Reason: From the documentation and from discussions at the visit the visitors were happy that the requirements of the HPC relating to this standard were being met. The visitors did however note a number of points that came up in the meeting with the trainees. Some trainees expressed concern that they did not always feel comfortable offering critical feedback to the course team. The visitors note that the ability to give and receive feedback is a professional aspect of practice. The visitors recommend that the education provider may want to offer trainees additional support to encourage a feedback culture throughout the programme and encourage trainees (perhaps with a taught element) to give and receive effective feedback in all settings.

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Sabiha Azmi
Peter Branston

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