
Visitors' report

Name of education provider	De Montfort University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Speech and Language therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Speech and language therapist
Date of visit	6 – 7 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 'speech and language therapist' 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 24 August 2017, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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 education provider validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The education provider, 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 education provider and the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Catherine Mackenzie (Speech and language therapist) Lucy Myers (Speech and language therapist) Clare Bates (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer	Jasmine Pokuaa Oduro-Bonsrah
Proposed student numbers	35 per cohort, one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2017
Chair	Tracy Cruickshank (De Montfort University)
Secretary	Sophia Welton (De Montfort University)
Members of the joint panel	Helen Burbidge (Internal Panel Member) Sally Lloyd (Internal Panel Member) Julia Stewart (External Panel Member and The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists representative)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from two years ago prior to the visit as there are currently no external examiners 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 visitors were given a presentation on the resources available to students and an equipment list.

The HCPC met with students from the BSc Human communication: Speech and Language therapy programme at the education provider, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it as it is not approved.

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 42 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 16 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 did not make any 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 demonstrate how they communicate their recognition of prior learning (RPL) policies to applicants.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the Student Admissions Policy, which outlines how staff should apply the RPL policies, as well as the Equality Impact form. The visitors were satisfied that the RPL policies were appropriate for this programme, however, the visitors were unable to see how the policy would be effectively communicated to applicants and students. For example, the visitors could not see how applicants would have access to information regarding what might be accepted as RPL and the procedures associated with this. In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were told that some applicants and current students may be admitted on to the programme using the RPL route. The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates how the education provider will effectively communicate their RPL policies and associated processes to potential applicants and students.

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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure the information to applicants regarding additional course costs is accurate.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the course leaflet, open day presentation and interview presentation. The visitors noted in the open day presentation that there is an expectation that students will have to make a contribution towards their placement costs. The visitors also noted under the additional costs of the programme website that students will be required to pay for their travel costs to placements. At the visit the visitors asked students and the programme team about the costs of travel to placements. The visitors were told by the students that they could claim back the cost of travel. Additionally, the programme team told the visitors that travel is subsidised by the education provider and there was a formula for calculating how much students can claim back. From the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors were not clear whether students will have to pay for all the costs associated with travel to placements as highlighted on the programme website or whether some of the costs will be subsidised by the education provider. The education provider should provide evidence to demonstrate how they will clarify to applicants and students what the costs associated with the programme will be, especially the costs associated with the travel costs to placements, so that these applicants can have all the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure that the resources to support student learning throughout the programme are clear and consistent to reflect the programme title.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that there were several instances of the programme being referred to as 'BSc (Hons) Human Communication: Speech and Language Therapy'. There are examples of this programme title in the student handbook and programme specification. There were other examples of the programme being referred to as BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy and this was confirmed by the education provider at the visit as the new programme name. The visitors note that the information in the programme documentation could be misleading to students as it is unclear, inconsistent and does not accurately reflect the programme title. The education provider must therefore, provide further evidence to demonstrate that the resources available to students are clear and consistent to accurately reflect the programme title.

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 programme documentation provides students with the information they require to progress and achieve the relevant learning outcomes on this programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware that students would be given the option to participate in practical exercises to support their learning. The visitors were directed to the 'protocol for consent in practical sessions' document. However, the visitors noted on the form that there is an implication that students can refuse to take part in practical sessions when practising the skills on their student colleagues who are acting as service users. The form states that "students may be asked to take part in practical exercises to support their learning. Participation is voluntary, however, students should be aware that in some circumstances non-participation will disadvantage them in their learning e.g. in preparation for clinical placements". The visitors note that it is vital for students to be able to take part in practical skills sessions as they need to practise the skills in order to become competent, safe and effective practitioners. The visitors also note that the information provided on the form 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 observations of the activity. The education provider must therefore demonstrate how they ensure that the programme documentation, including the consent form, provides students with the information they require to progress and achieve the relevant learning outcomes on the programme.

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 demonstrate that the resources, particularly test equipment, effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to several of De Montfort University's webpages, Blackboard, Library subject guide and, at the visit, the programme team showed the visitors a virtual tour of the resources available to students. During the meeting with the students the visitors were told that students could borrow the test equipment available to them in the speech and language therapy department for up to two weeks. Furthermore, the students informed the visitors that at times there is limited test equipment, and when the test equipment is returned sometimes there are parts missing, which makes it difficult to practise their skills. The programme team told the visitors that the test equipment in the speech and language therapy department is for reference only and, although students are allowed to access it on a trust basis, they are not supposed to take it out. The visitors therefore note that the current test equipment is not adequate to support the required learning and teaching activities of this programme because of the missing parts of the test equipment. Additionally, the visitors are unsure whether students are clear about whether they are allowed to borrow the test equipment for weeks at a time. The visitors therefore require evidence to demonstrate that there will be adequate resources, particularly test equipment, to support the required learning and teaching activities of this programme and also provide evidence to demonstrate that students are clear about the borrowing policies for the test equipment, in order for them to practise their skills.

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 demonstrate what protocols they have in place for obtaining consent from students when they act as service users in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the 'protocol for consent in practical sessions' form which outlined the process for obtaining consent when students participate in practical and clinical teaching. In relation to the above 3.8 standard, the form only highlights that participation is sought for students who want to take part in practicing their skills as opposed to acting as service users in these practical sessions. Furthermore, in the protocol for consent in practical sessions form, it states that "Where a student does not wish to take part in a practical session this should be discussed with the relevant member of staff". The visitors note that this statement could take away the students' right of confidentiality. Furthermore, from discussions at the visit with the students the visitors were informed by the students that they had no knowledge of this consent form. As such, the education provider will have to demonstrate how they have appropriate protocols in place to obtain consent from students when participating as service users in practical and clinical teaching. In addition, the education provider will have to demonstrate how they communicate to students what would happen if they chose to withdraw their consent when acting as service users in practical sessions.

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 the module templates. However, the visitors 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, including NHS and role emerging placements. Furthermore, in the practice placement meeting, the providers told the visitors that they were committed to being able to provide placements for this programme. The education provider told the visitors that they have had verbal commitments from the placement providers to take students from this programme. The programme team also informed the visitors that they were looking at smaller providers such as schools and are currently thinking about how to develop new placements. However, the visitors note that without seeing the formal agreements, they are unable to make a judgment about whether placements are integral to the programme for all students. The education provider therefore needs to provide evidence of the formal arrangements to secure practice placements for all students.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate what mechanisms are in place to ensure a safe and supportive environment for students on practice placements, especially when they go on home visits.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the ‘clinical practice profile and approval form’ as well as the ‘learning agreement’. From a review of the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that students may have to go on home visits whilst out on placement. In the placement provider meeting the visitors were told that as providers they are expected to undertake relevant risk assessments before a student goes to the homes alone. Firstly, the visitors did not receive any evidence of what risk assessments are, so could not make a judgment about whether these risk assessments carried out by the placement providers were appropriate to provide a safe and supportive environment for students. The visitors were also unsure about how the education provider will ensure that all placements carry out risk assessments when students work alone in the service user’s home. The visitors were unclear on how the induction processes would explain to students about the risks and safety issues associated with lone working in a service user’s homes. And lastly, the visitors could not also see how there will be relevant assessment risks to ensure the safety of the service user who is visited in their homes by the lone working student. The education provider therefore, needs to provide further evidence to demonstrate what mechanisms are in place to ensure the safety of service users when visited by students who are lone working as well as ensure the safety of students when they go on home visits alone.

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 to demonstrate that there is a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the ‘clinical practice profile and approval form’ as well as the ‘learning agreement’. In the documentation provided the visitors noted different overarching policies, systems and procedures for approving placements. At the visit, the visitors were informed that the placement provider will have to complete this approval form to be submitted and checked by the education provider. Furthermore, as part of the monitoring process of placements the placement providers will be required to submit a yearly self-declaration form to

demonstrate that they are adhering to the approval criteria. The visitors were clear that the placement providers will have to complete the approval form in order to be used as a placement opportunity. However, the visitors were unclear, how the education provider will make sure that the self-declaration by the placement provider will ensure that the processes, policies and systems in place at both the NHS and role-emerging placement setting will provide a safe and supportive environment for students. The education provider will therefore need to demonstrate how they ensure that there is a thorough and effective system in place for approving and monitoring all placements.

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 evidence of how they ensure equality and diversity policies are in place within practice placements.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the learning agreement. The visitors reviewed this information but were unable to determine from this how the education provider ensures that practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place in relation to students. Discussions with the programme team indicated that there is a process in place to ensure practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place, but the visitors were unsure what these processes were and how this process formed part of the auditing and approving of all placements as they could not see it within the documentation. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence that demonstrates how the programme ensures equality and diversity policies are in place within practice placements.

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 that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the 'clinical practice profile and approval form'. In the documentation provided the visitors noted different overarching policies, systems and procedures for approving placements. At the visit, the visitors were informed that the placement provider will have to complete this approval form to be submitted and checked by the education provider. The visitors were clear that the placement providers will have to complete the approval form in order to be used as a placement opportunity which confirms that there is an adequate number of staff. However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider, will ensure that the self-declaration by the placement providers will ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting who will support student learning in a safe environment. The visitors did not also see evidence of what the education provider considers as an adequate number of staff and why this number is appropriate. The education provider will therefore need to demonstrate how their approval process will ensure that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in all placement settings.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the ‘clinical practice profile and approval form’ and the ‘learning agreement’. In the documentation provided the visitors noted different overarching policies, systems and procedures for approving placements. At the visit, the visitors were informed that the placement provider will have to complete this approval form to be submitted and checked by the education provider. The visitors were clear that the placement providers will have to complete the approval form in order to be used as a placement opportunity. However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider will ensure that the self-declaration by the placement providers will ensure that the practice placement educators will have the relevant knowledge, skills and expertise to support student learning in a safe environment. The education provider will therefore need to demonstrate how their approval process will ensure that all practice placement educators in all settings will have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training in order to supervise students effectively on this programme.

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the block placement preparation workshop and were shown the ‘Health and Care Professions (H&CP) Practice Education Guidance’ at the visit. The visitors learnt that the practice placement preparation workshop is a presentation used in the training of practice educators. However, during discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that practice placement educators are given the option to attend training. The placement providers also told the visitors that the practice educators have access to training and top up training is offered to educators. The visitors noted that placement areas are required to confirm the training staff have received, however, the visitors were unclear about the steps taken by the education provider to ensure that suitably trained placement educators were in place for students. The visitors were unclear on how all placement educators, particularly new educators and educators from role emerging placement areas will be appropriately trained to effectively support students on this programme. The visitors were also not clear what the training and top up offered by the practice placement providers consisted of, and therefore could not determine if this was appropriate. In addition, the visitors were unsure about what refresher training will be available to practice placement educators, and therefore how they will be kept up-to-date with the expectations of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure all practice placement educators undertake appropriate initial and refresher training in order to equip them to effectively supervise and support students on this programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence of how they will ensure and monitor that the practice educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed

Reason: To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the 'clinical practice profile and approval form'. In the documentation provided the visitors noted a different overarching policies, systems and procedures for approving placements. At the visit, the visitors were informed that the placement provider will have to complete this approval form to be submitted and checked by the education provider. The visitors were clear that the placement providers will have to complete the approval form in order to be used as a placement opportunity. However, the visitors were unsure how the education provider themselves will ensure that the practice placement educators will be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed. In particular, the visitors are unsure about which practice placement educators will be supervising students in the role emerging placements and therefore whether these educators will be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed. The education provider will therefore need to demonstrate how their approval process will ensure that practice placement educators who will be supervising students on this programme will be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

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 should review their training documentation to ensure that practice educators are fully prepared for placement.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and at the visit, the visitors saw in the block placement preparation workshop presentation that placement educators are referred to the 'HCPC Practice Education Guidance, 2016'. Firstly, the visitors noted that the education provider had incorrectly named the document and the accurate title, 'Health and Care Professions (H&CP) Practice Education Guidance' is not a HCPC document, and instead a publication by a professional body.

Additionally, in relation to the 5.8 condition above, the visitors note that this information could be misleading to practice placement educators as it highlights that training is not compulsory for all practice educators. The visitors therefore note that this publication could impact on the preparedness of practice educators as it implies training for educators is optional.

The visitors therefore require that the programme team amends the training documentation, so that it reflects the correct information regarding who created the

publication and ensures that the practice educators are aware that training is mandatory in order to be fully prepared for placement.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which clearly articulates the reassessment opportunities on this programme.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the course template. From a review of the documentation the visitors could not identify how many reassessment opportunities students will have for this programme. The visitors noted in the student handbook and the validation document that students had one reassessment opportunity for some modules such as the Professional Practice 2 module. It was also confirmed by the programme team that students have one reassessment opportunity. However, the visitors noted in the course template for the same module that students will have two reassessment opportunities. The visitors were therefore unclear on what the reassessment opportunities are due to the inconsistencies in the documentation and how this will effectively be communicated to students, so they can know how to progress and achieve within the programme. The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate what the reassessment opportunities are for this programme and how this information will be consistently and accurately communicated to students.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the programme documentation available to students clearly articulates what students must pass in order to progress and achieve within the programme.

Reason: From an initial review of the documentation, the visitors noted what the requirements are for achievement and progression within the programme. However, in the student handbook it states “All modules must be passed at each level for students to proceed onto the next level. With very few exceptions (practical phonetics tests in SALT 1008 and 2202 for which particular regulations apply) all assessments are classed as ‘essential’ and therefore must be passed in order to pass each module”. At the visit, the education provider clarified that the practical phonetic test modules are compulsory and students must pass them. The visitors therefore note that this statement could be misleading as it implies that students will not have to pass the practical phonetics tests. The education should therefore provide further evidence to demonstrate how they clearly articulate to students what they must pass in the programme in order to progress and achieve within the programme.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the programme documentation clearly articulates that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register.

Reason: To evidence that this standard is met by the programme the visitors were directed to the course template. However, the visitors could not see in the programme documentation where it clearly states that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register. The visitors were also unclear how the education provider ensures that students are aware that this is the case. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the assessment regulations clearly specify that aegrotat award do not provide eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.

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 further evidence to demonstrate that the assessment regulations clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who is from a relevant part of the HCPC Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: For this standard, the visitors were referred to section one of the guide to external examining at De Montfort University. The visitors noted that as part of the selection and appointment criteria external examiners must meet “applicable criteria set out by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies”. However, the visitors could not be certain from this evidence that this would mean that the HCPC standard would be met. This is because it is not defined in the assessment regulations as to whether the external examiners would have to be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register and, if not, that there is an appropriate reason for appointing an examiner who is not from the relevant part of the Register. As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the assessment regulations for this programme specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who is from a relevant part of the HCPC Register, and, if not, that there is an appropriate reason for appointing an examiner who is not from the relevant part of the Register

Catherine Mackenzie
Lucy Myers
Clare Bates