hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Validating body / Awarding body	University of East Anglia
Programme name	Certificate of Higher Education in Emergency Medical Care (incorporating the IHCD paramedic award)
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	11-12 March 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 14 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Paramedic' 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) on20 May 2010. At the Committee meeting on 21 October 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was an HPC only visit. The education provider and awarding body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Robert Fellows (Paramedic) Gordon Pollard (Paramedic)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	140 per cohort, twice a year (280 total
Initial approval	November 2008
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	12 November 2010
Chair	Steven Russell (University of East Anglia)
Secretary	Timothy Southon (University of East Anglia)

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	☐	☒	☐
IHCD Information	☒	☐	☐
Module workbooks	☒	☐	☐
Additional education provider information	☒	☐	☐

The HPC did not review External examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as the education provider did not submit it.

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.

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 32 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 25 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 revisit and resubmit all the submitted programme documentation and any other documents to ensure that the terminology in use is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation.

Reason: In the documentation provided, there were instances of out-of-date terminology in reference to individuals being "state registered". The documentation was unclear when stating that successful completion of the programme leads to eligibility to apply to the register only. The terminology used when referring to the College of Paramedics was also out-of-date in that it referred to them as the British Paramedic Association. The visitors considered the terminology could be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require the documentation to be thoroughly reviewed to remove and correct any instance of incorrect or out of date terminology and to clearly articulate that successful completion of the programme provides eligibility for admission to the HPC register only.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate the systems that are in place to manage the programme effectively.

Reason: From the programme documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors were not satisfied they had received enough evidence to show how the partnership between the two bodies running and delivering this programme worked together effectively. Discussions at the visit revealed some evidence of collaborations and reviews but there was no formal recognition of the arrangements in place or documentary evidence of past collaborative meetings. The visitors noted in particular the discussed and documented Paramedic Pathway Group, Regional Clinical Learning and Development Group, formal weekly reviews of student feedback, the external verification by the IHCD, external examiner reports and responses, audit processes for the programme (placements, hospitals, tutor evaluations, course evaluations) and service level agreements with placement providers. The visitors require greater clarity of evidence that illustrates the formal programme review processes are in place and copies of documents (such as agendas, minutes, reports, actions etc) relating to these processes in order to demonstrate the systems are in place and manage the programme effectively.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there are regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Reason: From the programme documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors were not satisfied they had received enough evidence to show the programme had regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place. Discussions at the visit revealed there were continuous evaluations and reviews but there was no formal recognition of the arrangements in place. The visitors noted in particular, the discussed Paramedic Pathway Group, Regional Clinical Learning and Development Group, formal weekly reviews of student feedback, the external verification by the IHCD, external examiner reports and responses, and audit processes for the programme (placements, hospitals, tutor evaluations, course evaluations). The visitors require evidence that illustrates the formal programme monitoring and review processes are in place and copies of documents (such as agendas, minutes, reports, action plans etc) relating to these processes in order to demonstrate the programme has regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place from November 2008 to date.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the number of staff in place is adequate to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and through discussions at the visit there was only one Paramedic tutor on secondment to University of East Anglia and clear plans for a total of 840 students on the programme. Furthermore, there were two staff members primarily supporting the delivery of the programme (Senior Clinical Learning and Development Manager and Course Director). The visitors also noted there were no named module leaders, rather a 'module team' who developed each module with the Course Director leading all modules. Contingency plans were in place if the Course Director was absent for an extended period, namely the Director of School of Continuing Education would provide cover for this role.

In light of the above information the visitors were not satisfied there was an adequate number of staff in place to deliver the programme. In particular, the visitors were not satisfied the number of staff was adequate to manage the potential student numbers (in particular for study days and finding enough mentors for the three tiered system in place). Furthermore, the visitors were not satisfied the contingencies in place to manage any absence of staff from the programme were adequate to ensure its' effective delivery. In particular, the visitors highlighted the Course Director's responsibility to lead all modules was problematic. The visitors require further documentary evidence that there is an adequate number of staff in place for the 840 students, along with further evidence of the contingency plans in place, including named module leads for each module.

3.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Condition: The education provider must revisit programme documentation to ensure the facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings is clearly communicated.

Reason: Discussions at the visit with students, the programme team and the placement providers stated there was no provision for travel expenses and flexible arrangements for study days in particular and a general uncertainty around annual leave information, access to books and other resources including IT resources whilst on placement. The discussion with the senior team however revealed all of these provisions were in place if requested. The lack of knowledge demonstrated by the students, the programme team and the placement providers would add additional pressures and difficulties for the student on top of the required learning. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to be revised making the support provisions for the welfare and wellbeing of a large number of students more widely known and more clearly communicated to both to the visitors and the students.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the consent form and protocols used to obtain consent to ensure there are clearly articulated opt-out pathways.

Reason: From the documentation provided by the education provider during the visit it was clear that a policy for obtaining student consent was in place. The wording on the form did not make it clear that students could opt out of certain practical involvement if they so wished. In order to ensure this standard is being met the visitors need a revised form and guidelines to more clearly state that there are opt-out pathways and associated learning plans.

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 revise the programme documentation to ensure the attendance policy for the programme is clearly communicated to the students.

Reason: From the documentation provided it was stated there was an expectation for the students to attend all onsite study days with a mandatory attendance of 100%. From discussions at the visit it became apparent that although there was the 100% mandatory requirement the study days were repeated and a support package would be put in place if the student could not attend the days, with options to put the module on hold or continue the module and attend the day the next time it was held. Because the students, programme team and practice placement educators were not aware of this information the visitors require it to be included within the programme documentation.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme to clearly reflect the following standard of proficiency and demonstrate how these learning outcomes for this standard of proficiency are addressed and assessed:

- **2a.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques.**

Reason: Although the visitors received all the modules for the programme and its constituent components prior to the visit, there was insufficient evidence provided for the visitors to judge if the above standard of proficiency had been met in its' entirety. The visitors particularly noted the section of the standard of proficiency that states registrant paramedics must "be able to conduct a thorough and detailed physical examination of the patient using observations, palpation, auscultation and other assessment skills to inform clinical reasoning and to guide the formulation of a diagnosis across all age ranges, including calling for specialist help where available". Therefore the visitors require revised documentation detailing how this standard of proficiency is taught and assessed.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation to clarify which curriculum guidance it is, that they use.

Reason: The documents received prior to the visit did not make it clear which version of the College of Paramedics Curriculum Guidance was being used. Discussions at the visit clarified it was the College of Paramedics Curriculum Guidance and Competence Framework (2nd edition, Jan 2008). The documentation also repeatedly referred to the College of Paramedics by their previous designation – the British Paramedic Association. To clarify this information and prevent confusion for the students and the education provider, the visitors require the programme documentation to be revised with the additional information of which version is used and the new name for the British Paramedic Association.

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 revisit the programme documentation to highlight where students are taught about the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: From the documentation provided there was no clear area where this particular topic is taught and these standards were not included in the reading lists. The visitors were satisfied the principles of conduct, performance and ethics

are taught within the programme but could not locate where information regarding these particular standards were. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to clearly make reference to the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and include the standards and associated document - Guidance on conduct and ethics for students, in the modules and reading lists.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how the programme supports and develops autonomous and reflective thinking.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider there was no clear research components of the programme taught beyond the first year. Discussions at the visit stated the basic level of research taught in the first year was enough to support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking. The visitors were not clear as to how the programme continued to support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking past this first year and so could fully support and develop student progression from 'novice' to 'expert' through the theoretical and practical components of the programme. Graduates of the programme must be able to practice autonomously with reflective thinking and a knowledge of evidence based practice. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme supports and develops evidence based practice, autonomous and reflective thinking through the programme.

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to clarify the mentorship model used.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions at the visit, how the three tiered mentorship model (senior mentor, associate mentor and mentor) worked proved to be very confusing. The placement providers and education provider had differing terminology which made it difficult to understand where the students interacted with the mentors and what each role was. The visitors require clarification that practice placements remain integral to the programme and also require the education provider to clarify the mentorship structure to ensure all parties involved understand the roles and contact points for the mentors and students.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide documentation that clarifies the number, duration and range of practice placements and clarifies the supernumerary role, identifying the number of hours undertaken by the students in this role.

Reason: The documentation received prior to the visit did not detail the number, duration and range of placements to be undertaken by students. In particular, the documentation was unclear as to what the supernumerary role involved for the student. Discussions revealed it was in essence to be a 'third person' in an observational capacity on an ambulance however; it was not clear how many hours this accounted for and where the hours were located within the programme. Additionally the documentation was unclear as to the duration of placements, and where the learning outcomes were assessed and where they were not assessed during placement. In addition, in discussion with programme team and students, they also could not identify who were the named mentors at all locations across the trust.

Therefore the visitors require further documentation which details all of the information regarding the placement experience to ensure that practice placements are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes, both geographically and numerically in support of 800 plus students, including information regarding the supernumerary role. Documentation should also address how this information is communicated to students and placement supervisors.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how they manage and develop mentoring on the programme.

Reason: The mentoring is an important aspect of the programme and the documentation provided prior to the visit did not have any information regarding how the mentoring was managed or developed across the practice area. Discussions at the visit revealed it very much relied on informal arrangements. The visitors realise there are confidentiality aspects to mentoring but need to ensure the placements are a safe and supportive environment for the students. The visitors therefore require evidence of how mentoring is managed and developed to reduce the risks in the practice environment.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the audits that the clinical placements on the programme are subjected to. This should include details of the processes for initial approval and the systems for ongoing monitoring and assessment of placements at all locations across the practice placement arena.

Reason: In the documentation provided prior to the visit information about placement audits, and therefore how the programme team ensures that placement environments are suitable, was not provided. Discussions at the visit revealed it very much relied on informal arrangements. The visitors noted in

particular, the discussed Paramedic Pathway Group, Regional Clinical Learning and Development Group, formal weekly reviews of student feedback, the external verification by the IHCD, external examiner reports and responses, and audit processes for the placements and hospitals. The visitors require evidence that illustrates the formal placement monitoring and review processes are in place and copies of documents (such as agendas, minutes, reports, actions etc) relating to these processes in order to demonstrate the programme has effective approval and monitoring and systems for all of the placements in the practice arena.

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 number of mentors involved with the programme.

Reason: In the discussions and documentation provided it was not clear how many mentors were involved with the programme over the ambulance trust service area. With the potential for 840 students and the three tiered mentorship model it was unclear whether there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and fully available staff at the practice placement setting or not. The visitors therefore require information regarding the associate mentors, mentors and lead mentors both numerically and geographically across the ambulance trust service arena to handle the increased student numbers.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence which identifies the clinical qualifications and relevant experience of practice placement mentors.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit does not identify the clinical qualifications and relevant experience which is required of the mentors in the three tiered mentorship model. The visitors need to ensure the qualifications and experience of the mentors is balanced geographically across the trust service area and within each clinical placement. The visitors, therefore, require the education provider to submit full evidence which identifies required clinical qualifications and experience and how they are mapped across the lead mentor, associate mentor and mentor.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit the curriculum details of the K320 Mentorship and assessment in health and social care settings qualification they require from the mentors.

Reason: The documentation submitted did not provide information about this qualification. The education provider has stipulated they require mentors to

undertake this qualification and that it ensures practice placements are a safe and supportive environment. The visitors require evidence about the curriculum of this K320 to ensure this qualification is appropriate and suitable to provide an adequate level of practice placement educator training for the mentors. The visitors also require evidence to show how adequate numbers of staff will be developed through this programme to meet the needs of 800 plus students.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the collaboration in place between the education provider and the practice placement providers.

Reason: From the programme documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors felt that they had not received enough evidence to show how the partnership between the education provider and the practice placements worked together effectively and regularly. Discussions at the visit revealed there were collaborations and reviews but there was no formal recognition of the arrangements in place. This lack of formal communication could undermine the longevity of the partnership arrangements in place. The visitors therefore require evidence regarding the nature, frequency and actions resulting from collaborations since November 2008 to date.

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 must provide evidence that demonstrates how students and practice placement educators are informed about the timings and duration of placements, the communication and lines of responsibility and the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit did not make it clear how students and practice placement educators are informed about the timings and duration of placements, the communication and lines of responsibility and the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress. Discussions at the visit clarified the information and the visitors were satisfied that these were areas the education provider had considered. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence that these areas are communicated to students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators across all areas of the clinical arena so that students and mentors are fully prepared for placements.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme to clearly reflect the following standard of proficiency and demonstrate how these learning outcomes for this standard of proficiency are addressed and assessed:

- **2a.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques.**

Reason: Although the visitors received all the modules for the programme and its constituent components prior to the visit, there was insufficient evidence provided for the visitors to judge if the assessment of the learning outcomes meant the above standard of proficiency had been met in its' entirety. The visitors noted particularly the section of the standard of proficiency that states registrant paramedics must "be able to conduct a thorough and detailed physical examination of the patient using observations, palpation, auscultation and other assessment skills to inform clinical reasoning and to guide the formulation of a diagnosis across all age ranges, including calling for specialist help where available". The visitors require revised documentation detailing the assessment strategy and design for the learning outcome relating to this standard of proficiency.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit programme documentation to clarify the number of practice hours assessed for students.

Reason: The documentation provided was unclear as to the number of hours of practice students are assessed for and the number of hours of practice the student is not assessed for within the programme. In order for the visitors to judge how the professional aspects of practice are assessed in the practice placement setting, the visitors require clarification of the practice hours and assessments including details of the supportive preceptorship arrangements for students post qualification.

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the external verifications from the IHCD of the practice placements.

Reason: The documentation provided stated the practice placements were externally verified by the IHCD but provided no evidence of this verification either for the theory elements or for any aspects of the practice arena. The visitors were

unclear as to how the education provider ensured assessment of students within each placement site was applied consistently across all divisions of the ambulance trust, as these appeared to have an inconsistent approach. The visitors therefore require this evidence to ensure there is a parity of assessment standards between the education provider and the practice placements in all clinical and non-clinical areas.

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 revisit the programme documentation including admissions materials, to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the HPC Register.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit did not clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the HPC Register. The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation to ensure this is clearly articulated throughout the programme documentation and admissions material.

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 revisit the programme documentation to clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register or propose alternative arrangements with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation provided there was insufficient detail regarding the appointment requirements for external examiners and details of the current external examiner on the programme. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider wide assessment regulations however require evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiners on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement. The visitors also require evidence regarding the appointed external examiner, including their Curriculum Vitae, the induction procedures the education provider took them through on appointment and the external examiners' reports for the programme.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revising their criminal convictions check policy to introduce an additional criminal convictions check for non-EU applicants.

Reason: The documentation indicated that only one criminal conviction check was carried out on applicants when they first applied. The visitors felt this standard was met but recognised that a criminal conviction check on a non-EU citizen when they have only been in the country a short time would not disclose any pertinent information. The visitors were aware that a check, three months after admittance onto the programme, on non-EU citizens could disclose more relevant information and would suggest the education provider take this policy on board.

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Recommendation: The education provider could consider changing their assessment strategy methods in placements from the numerical audit of skills practice to a competency based assessment to meet learning outcomes.

Reason: Discussions at the visit indicated the education provider and placement partner were discussing the benefits of moving to a more competency based assessment rather than the number based approach currently used. The visitors agreed this standard was met but felt the programme would be further enhanced by moving to a competency based approach. The visitors noted that other similar programmes have already done so and so this may increase the appeal of the programme for applicants.

Robert Fellows
Gordon Pollard