

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Glasgow Caledonian University & University of Strathclyde
Programme name	D.Psych in Counselling Psychology
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Counselling psychologist
Date of visit	26 – 27 June 2012

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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 'Counselling 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 4 December 2012. At the Committee meeting on 4 December 2012, 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. The professional body 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	David Packwood (Counselling psychologist) Emcee Chekwas (Forensic psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Victoria Adenugba
Proposed student numbers	25 per cohort
First approved intake	January 2007
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012 or October 2012
Chair	Elizabeth Williamson (Glasgow Caledonian University)
Secretary	Elaine Skea (Glasgow Caledonian University) Alen MacKinlay (Glasgow Caledonian University)
Members of the joint panel	Peter Martin (British Psychological Society) Rupal Nathwani (British Psychological Society) Helen Nicholas (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 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"/>

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 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 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.

Conditions

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure placement educators and supervisors are clear with regards to the nature and purpose of their role in the assessment process

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated placement educators and supervisors received training and a placement handbook detailing programme information, before they supervised a student. During discussions, the programme team indicated this training could be in the form of a visit, email or telephone discussion and placement educators and supervisors are encouraged to contact the programme team if they were unclear about anything. Discussions with the placement providers indicated they were unclear as to whether or not they had received training or subsequent refresher training. The programme team, however, indicated all placement educators and supervisors signed the placement agreement which stated they had “received training from a Programme Placement Tutor”. The visitors also learnt that it was the students who brought their learning outcomes to their new placements and go through them with their placement educator or supervisor. From the evidence provided the visitors could not determine if the placement educators and supervisors training was appropriate or if it included sufficient information on the assessment of learning outcomes. From a review of the Placement handbook the visitors considered there to be insufficient information regarding learning outcomes and assessment to provide or supplement training. As such the visitors were concerned that currently there was no way for the programme team to be assured that all placement educators and supervisors are clear with regards to the nature and purpose of their role in the assessment process. The visitors consider the condition under SET 5.11 to link with this condition as both of these conditions deal with the preparation of placement educators and supervisors working with students from the programme. In order to determine this standard is fully met the visitors require the programme team to demonstrate how they ensure all placement supervisors are appropriately trained and understand their role in the assessment process.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how they ensure all supervisors are up-to-date with their training and knowledge of the programme.

Reason: Discussion with placement educators and supervisors indicated that some did not receive updates regarding the programme regularly. The visitors learnt that this information was dispensed during the ‘Open day’ which placement educators and supervisors attended with the programme team to receive refresher training. The visitors noted not all placement educators and supervisors were informed of updates and changes to the programme or had their training refreshed and that these open days were not mandatory. The visitors could not

determine whether the programme team monitored training uptake and took appropriate action if supervisors had not attended training. The visitors also learnt that updates to the programme were sometimes reflected within the placement handbook. However due to the size of the handbook, placement educators and supervisors found it laborious and sometime unfeasible to have to reread the handbook in its entirety every year to find out about changes. The visitors were concerned that if information regarding changes to the programme were not clearly highlighted to placement educators and supervisors they could easily be overlooked. The visitors consider the condition under SET 5.11 to link with this condition as both of these conditions deal with the preparation of placement supervisors working with students from the programme. In order to determine this standard is fully met the visitors require the programme team to demonstrate how they ensure all supervisors are up-to-date with their training and knowledge of the programme.

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 further evidence to demonstrate how placement supervisors are fully prepared for placement which includes understanding the learning outcomes to be achieved.

Reason: From a review of the placement handbook and through discussions with the placement educators and supervisors the visitors learnt that students brought the learning outcomes and assessment criteria to practice educators and supervisors at the start of their placement. The visitors were concerned that without the programme team disseminating this information, confusions could arise as to what the learning outcomes require. As the programme team should maintain responsibility for ensuring placement educators and supervisors are fully prepared for placements including understanding the learning outcomes to be achieved, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how placement educators and supervisors are fully prepared for placement which includes understanding the learning outcomes to be achieved. The visitors consider the condition under SET 5.8 to link with this condition as both of these conditions deal with the preparation of placement supervisors working with students from the programme.

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 programme team must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register or that other arrangements will be agreed.

Reason: The visitors noted that insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme was provided in the documentation submitted by the education provider. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner arrangements. However, this standard requires the clear articulation of the 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. The visitors therefore require evidence that HPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the programme documentation to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to develop the number and range of their placements settings.

Reason: The visitors were happy that this standard was being met as students who successfully complete this programme did gain an appropriate number, duration and range of practice placements to achieve the learning outcomes. During discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt that there were discussions currently taking place about the education provider running a clinic which would provide 5 placements. They also learnt that there was discussion about the programme holding a range of placements which they would provide and send students too rather than students having to find their own placements, as this could sometimes be difficult for them to obtain especially during the first year of study. The visitors suggest the programme team endeavours to put these proposals into practice to further improve the placement opportunities available to students.

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

Recommendation: The programme team should continue to strengthen the communication and collaboration between themselves and all their placement providers and supervisors.

Reason: The visitors were happy that this standard was being met as there were systems in place such as the 'Open day' where placement educators and supervisors had the opportunity to meet with each other and the programme team. To ensure that the programme team continues to work regularly together with their practice educators and supervisors, the visitors encourage the programme team to continue to strengthen and develop the communication and collaboration between both parties.

David Packwood
Emcee Chekwas