

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	London South Bank University
Programme name	DipHE Operating Department Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Operating department practitioner
Date of visit	15 – 17 June 2011

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Operating department practitioner' 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on <25 August 2011. At the Committee meeting on 13 October 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - the level of qualification for entry to the Register, programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, 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 part of a joint event as the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered a the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice, BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, Pg Dip Occupational Therapy, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography, BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography and Pg Dip Therapeutic Radiography.

The professional bodies 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the professional bodies, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Nick Clark (Operating department practitioner) Paul Blakeman (Chiropodist / podiatrist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	20
First approved intake	September 2003
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2011
Chair	Holly Nicholas (London South Bank University)
Secretary	Catherine Moss (London South Bank University)
Members of the joint panel	Lisa Greatrex (Internal Panel Member) Helen Booth (College of Operating Department Practice)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional information about programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit, however, they were reviewed at the visit itself.

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

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme.

Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they monitor and evaluate the management of placement setting allocations.

Reason: In discussion with students at the visit the visitors noted that it was possible for a student to be placed in a practice setting without having had any theoretical teaching about that setting beforehand. The model of practice placement setting allocation used by the programme team means that it is the responsibility of the practice educator to manage the allocation of placement settings. The visitors also noted that the practice placement educator was not always aware of what theoretical teaching a student had undertaken before undertaking placement. From these discussions the visitors were assured that this was an intermittent issue that did not occur with one particular required setting or with one particular placement provider. However, it is the programme teams' responsibility to support students through the programme and for the programme team to monitor and subsequently act appropriately on any student feedback. The visitors considered this to be particularly important in light of the potential for differing students' experiences of placement setting management and the need to maintain parity of placement experience across the cohorts. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team will monitor the management of placement setting allocation. In this way the visitors can be sure that there are no repeated instances of theoretical learning following placements occurring and that there is a parity of student placement experience across all cohorts.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of how the programme specific information, provided in the placement handbook, is effectively used.

Reason: In the documentation provided prior to the visit the visitors noted the practice placement handbook (Document H, Appendix 4). The handbook was generic to all of the programmes within the Interprofessional Scheme in Allied Health Professions (IPSAH). From their reading of the handbook the visitors were satisfied that the generic programme material was complete. However, the section designed to contain the specific material for this programme was incomplete (Section 3, p37). The visitors therefore could not determine where information, specific to this programme, would be provided to students. The conditions against SETs 3.3, 4.3 and 5.11 can be looked at alongside this standard as they will help the programme team consider the relevant information the visitors wish to see. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide further evidence as to how the programme specific information in the placement handbook is effectively used.

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence that clearly demonstrates the requirements of the programme team, the practice educators and the students in terms of ensuring the theoretical and practical aspects of the programme are effectively integrated.

Reason: Discussion with the students at the visit indicated it was possible that a student could be placed in a practice setting without having had any theoretical teaching about that setting beforehand. As independent learners, the programme team expects that students take responsibility to ensure they have the required knowledge base prior to undertaking any placement, including those of which they have received no theoretical teaching from the education provider. To facilitate this, a full set of programme documentation is available to students electronically. However, the visitors noted that the students felt that it was beneficial to receive theoretical teaching prior to placement rather than conducting their own research.

As it was expected of some students to undertake their own research into some areas of practice the visitors did not have sufficient evidence to be satisfied that theory and practice were effectively integrated into the curriculum. If some students had different preparation for the application of theoretical knowledge in a practical environment this could lead to perceived differences in the quality of their placement experience. The visitors therefore require further evidence that the programme team are aware of the issues arising from students being assigned to practice settings even if theoretical aspects of that setting have not been taught. This evidence should also include how the programme team will address these issues in future if they arise. The conditions against SETs 3.3 and 5.11 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are linked together. In this way the visitors can be sure that the theoretical and practical aspects of the programme are effectively integrated and that this standard is met.

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 programme team must provide evidence that demonstrates the arrangements the programme team has to ensure students are fully prepared for each of their individual placement settings.

Reason: Discussion with the students at the visit indicated that it was possible for a student to be placed in a practice setting without having had any theoretical teaching about that setting beforehand. As independent learners, the programme team expected students to take responsibility for ensuring that they have the

required knowledge base prior to undertaking any placement, including utilising the expertise of the placement educators as necessary. However, the visitors did not have sufficient evidence to determine how the programme team ensures that preparation for placement is consistent across the cohorts and what consideration is given to the effect any inconsistencies in preparation may have on students' practice placement experience. In preparing students for placement the education provider should provide the required knowledge base in an appropriate way for students. There must be adequate time for the student to prepare and allow for discussion if needed. The programme team should ensure the student can understand all information. The visitors also noted that the management of placement setting allocation is undertaken by the practice placement educators. However they were unsure how practice placement educators were informed about the resources provided for them by the education provider to aid them in undertaking their role.

The visitors therefore require evidence of how the programme team ensure that students and practice placement educators are fully prepared for placement. This evidence should demonstrate how the team ensure that students have the required theoretical knowledge in order to achieve what they need to while on placement. It should also demonstrate what information practice placement educators will be provided with in order to manage placement setting allocations. The conditions against SETs 3.3 and 5.11 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are linked together. In this way the visitors can be sure that practice placement educators are fully prepared to supervise students and that students on the programme can achieve the required learning outcomes associated with the practical aspects of 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 unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail in the external examiner recruitment policy specific to the programme. The visitors were satisfied with the recruitment policy and procedures as discussed at the visit. However, the visitors require evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should monitor how the implementation of the Placement Management Partnership (PMP) will impact on how the programme's placements are approved and monitored.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussions at the visit the programme team will maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements. They were therefore satisfied this standard is met. However in discussions with the senior team, practice placement providers and the programme team it was clear that the PMP system would shortly be implemented and utilised. The visitors therefore recommend that any future change to how practice placements are approved and monitored as a result of the PMP system should be communicated to the HPC through the major change process. In this way any changes can be monitored to ensure that the programme continues to meet all of the standards of education and training.

Nick Clark
Paul Blakeman