

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	London South Bank University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time (In service)
Relevant part of HPC Register	Radiographer
Relevant modality / domain	Therapeutic radiography
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 'Radiographer' or 'Therapeutic radiographer' 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 25 August 2011. At the Committee meeting on 13 October 2011, the programme was 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, 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 the following programmes –Pg Dip Therapeutic Radiography, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography, BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, Pg Dip Occupational Therapy, DipHE Operating Department Practice and BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice.

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	Russell Hart (Radiographer) Derek Adrian-Harris (Radiographer)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	14 Full time 12 Part time (in service)
First approved intake	1 September 2007 Full time 1 September 2008 Part time (in service)
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 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) Margo McBride (Society and College of Radiographers) Spencer Goodman (Society and College of Radiographers)

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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 4 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for 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 clearly state what the academic entry requirements are for entry to the programme.

Reason: The documentation provided to the visitors prior to the approval visit articulated how academic entry standards were applied to potential applicants and gave an indication of what these standards were. However, in discussion with the senior team it was highlighted the academic standards stated in the documentation were not those which were being used to determine applicants' suitability for a place on the programme. The visitors also noted that the academic entry standards displayed on the website were different from those stated in the documentation. As two different sets of academic standards were stated this could cause confusion and could lead to an applicant successfully appealing a decision if declined entry onto the programme. Therefore the visitors require clarification of what the academic standards for this programme are and require them to be clearly communicated to potential applicants. In this way the visitors can be sure that any applicant to the programme has the information they require to make an informed decision about whether to apply for a place on the programme.

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 commit to increasing the number of appropriately qualified therapeutic radiography staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation provided, both prior to the visit and during the visit, that there were roughly the equivalent of 3 full time staff delivering both the BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography and the Pg Dip Therapeutic Radiography programmes. In discussion with the students issues were raised about the ability of the small team to cope with any unexpected absences or staffing changes, and the team's ability to undertake visits to students at practice placement sites. These issues were also acknowledged by the programme team when they were raised by the visitors. In these discussions the visitors noted that the small number of the staff on the team caused issues when staff were unexpectedly absent and also that travel to placement sites proved difficult to balance with academic commitments. As a result of these issues the size of the programme team has had a negative effect on their ability to deliver the programme effectively both in the academic and practical settings.

The visitors require reassurance that the number of staff on the programme team delivering the therapeutic radiography programmes is appropriate to deliver an effective programme. The visitors suggest the education provider look at the staffing provision on the other allied health professions' programmes at the education provider and to consider the benefits of increasing the size of the

programme team. To provide this reassurance the visitors therefore require evidence that the education provider will commit to increasing the number of therapeutic radiography staff available to deliver this programme. In this way the visitors can be sure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to effectively deliver this programme.

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 commit to increasing the number of staff delivering the programme to effectively support the welfare and wellbeing of students, particularly while they are on practice placements.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation provided, prior to the visit and during the visit, there was roughly the equivalent of 3 full time staff delivering both the BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography and the Pg Dip Therapeutic Radiography programmes. In discussion with the students issues were raised about the teams' ability to cope with any unexpected absences or staffing changes, and the team's ability to undertake visits to students at practice placement sites. These issues were also discussed in the meeting with the practice placement providers and the programme team. In these discussions the visitors noted that the number of the staff on the team often prevented the team undertaking practice placement visits. As a result of this practice placement providers had, in some instances, stepped in to support the wellbeing and welfare of students when support from the programme team was unavailable. The visitors were pleased the students had had access to the practice educators when necessary however consider it to be the programme team's responsibility to provide adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings. The visitors considered the size of the programme team to have had a negative effect on their ability to provide effective support to students whilst in placement and so also a negative impact on their ability to deliver the programme effectively.

The visitors require reassurance that the number of staff on the programme team currently delivering the therapeutic radiography programmes is appropriate to effectively support students in the practice placement setting and to deliver an effective programme. The visitors suggest the education provider look at the staffing provision on the other allied health professions' programmes at the education provider and to consider the benefits of increasing the size of the programme team To provide this reassurance the visitors therefore require evidence that the education provider will commit to increasing the number of therapeutic radiography staff available to deliver this programme. In this way the visitors can be sure that there are an adequate number of staff in place to deliver this programme and effectively support the welfare and wellbeing of students, particularly while they are on practice placements.

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 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 current external examiner arrangements for the programme but need to see 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

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Recommendation: The education provider may wish to consider continuing the work being undertaken to facilitate the use of visiting lecturers, and external expertise, in the delivery of the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussion at the visit that subject areas are taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge and, where possible, external lecturers are used to deliver appropriate content. The visitors also noted that the programme team worked to include visiting lecturers in the programme and that finances had been provided by the education provider to facilitate this. Therefore the visitors were satisfied this standard is met. However, in discussion with the practice placement providers and educators the visitors noted that, despite their wish to participate, they often had difficulty gaining leave to teach on the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team continues their work to better facilitate visiting lecturers gaining leave and teaching on the programme. In this way the programme team can utilise the specialist expertise of these professionals and maintain the currency in the curriculum delivery.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider re-drafting the acquisition of skills statements to better reflect the HPC standards of proficiency that students will be able to meet upon successful completion of the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation the learning outcomes of the programme were mapped to the HPC standards of proficiency (SOPs) and how these learning outcomes were assessed. They were therefore satisfied this standard was met. However, the visitors noted that the 'acquisition of skills' statements (Document D, p 5-8) were at a very high level and did not articulate the key skills that students would be acquiring throughout the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team considers re-writing the 'acquisition of skills' statements to better articulate the key professional skills students would acquire through successful completion of the programme. By re-focusing these statements it would enable students to better understand how the teaching and learning activities will enable them to meet the HPC SOPs and meet the requirements for registration. In turn this may further embed in the learning and teaching the professional requirements students need to adhere to in order to be safe and effective radiographers.

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider monitoring the processes in place to obtain students' occupational health and criminal convictions clearances to avoid any unnecessary effect on practice placements.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation that there are a variety of facilities in place to support the wellbeing and welfare students while they are on the programme. However, in discussion with the students the visitors noted that the company engaged to undertake the students' occupational health checks, and identify if additional support may be needed for them to complete the programme, had taken longer than expected to complete these checks. It was also the case that some students had experienced difficulties in obtaining their criminal convictions clearance in the time available. As a consequence of these issues there were subsequent effects on some students' practice placements as they were unable to undertake their first placements until all of the checks and clearances had been completed and obtained. The visitors therefore recommend the programme team monitor the effectiveness of the processes in place to obtain students' criminal convictions clearances and undertake occupational health checks. In this way the programme team can identify any issues which may arise and work to rectify them or mitigate any effects they may have on a student's practice placement experience.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how the upcoming engagement with 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 maintains 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 will be coming on line shortly. The visitors noted that the system was not yet sufficient for the programme team's needs and as such would not currently be affecting the system of approval and monitoring of practice placements. However, with the development of the PMP system it was suggested this may affect how placements are approved and monitored in the future. The visitors therefore recommend that any 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.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how best to deal with negative student feedback about practice placement centres to ensure that there is equality of student experience while on practice placements.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussions at the visit that the programme team maintains a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements. They were therefore satisfied this standard is met. However, in discussions with the students they noted some significant differences in students' practice placement experience. The visitors articulated that a contributory factor to this difference was the model utilised by

the programme team which meant that students would spend the majority of their time at one placement centre. As a result a student would get the experience of one organisation and it's way of working. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team consider how best to deal with any significant issues which arise from student feedback regarding a practice placement centre. In this way they can manage any issues which arise and manage students' experience to ensure that all students on the programme get as equal an experience of practice placement as possible

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider re-drafting how the 'acquisition of skills' statements are assessed to better reflect the HPC standards of proficiency that students will be able to meet upon successful completion of the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation the learning outcomes of the programme were mapped to the HPC standards of proficiency (SOPs) and how that learning outcomes were assessed. They were therefore satisfied that this standard was met. However, the visitors noted that the 'acquisition of skills' statements (Document D, p 5-8) were at a very high level and did not articulate the key skills that students would be acquiring throughout the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team considers re-writing the 'acquisition of skills' assessments to better articulate how the programme will ensure that students can demonstrate the key professional skills required to be a radiographer. By re-focusing how the programme's assessments will do this it will enable students to better link assessment with the acquirement of professional skills in line with the HPC SOPs. In turn this will further embed the professional requirements students need to adhere to in order to be safe and effective practitioners.

Russell Hart
Derek Adrian-Harris