

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	New College Durham
<b>Validating body / Awarding body</b>	Teesside University
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Podiatry
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Chiropodist / Podiatrist
<b>Date of visit</b>	5 – 6 June 2013

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## Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Chiropodist' or 'Podiatrist' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 22 August 2013. At the Committee meeting, the programme was approved. 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 HCPC 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 HCPC 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. The validating body validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered a Prescription Only Medicine Certificate and Certificate in Local Analgesia. The validating body, the professional body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the validating body and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

## Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Catherine Smith (Chiropodist / Podiatrist) Paul Blakeman (Chiropodist / Podiatrist)
HCPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	34
First approved intake	September 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2013
Chair	Liz Holey (Teesside University)
Secretary	John Holmes (Teesside University)
Members of the joint panel	Jacquie Horner (Internal Panel Member) Tim James (Internal Panel Member) Paul Stone (Internal Panel Member) Diana Lesnic (Internal Panel Member) Scott Bullock (Internal Panel Member) Paul Fletcher (External Panel Member) Richard Robley (External Panel Member) Wilfred Foxe (The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists) Alan Wood (The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists) Alison Barlow (The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists)

## Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators/mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 47 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining ten 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

### **2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.**

**Condition:** The programme team must provide further clarity as to the selection and entry criteria that will be used in relation to applicants' command of English, and how this will be assessed in applications.

**Reason:** The programme documentation states that the admissions procedure will ensure that all entrants have achieved at least key skill level two in English. The programme specification also states that the programme team must satisfy themselves through the admissions process that entrants are able to communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written English, however the visitors were unclear what criteria or assessment would be used to measure this. It was also not clear if, or what, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level was required for entry to the programme for applicants whose first language is not English. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit programme documentation to clearly state what measures will be used to ensure that the English language requirements needed for entry to the programme are met.

### **2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.**

**Condition:** The programme team must provide further evidence in the documentation as to how the equality and diversity policy is implemented and monitored in admissions.

**Reason:** The education provider described in the SETs mapping document how the education provider embeds equality and diversity issues into the programme's delivery through staff updates and induction sessions for the students. However, the visitors were unable to determine what the equality and diversity policy being applied in the admissions process was. The visitors could also not determine, from the evidence provided, what processes are in place for collecting information on the implementation and monitoring of the policy. In discussion at the visit, the programme team stated that they have guidance around equality and diversity issues available to staff at interviews and that the policy is monitored throughout admissions. However, the visitors did not see evidence of the guidance or any associated monitoring processes. The visitors therefore require further evidence to determine how the education provider's equality and diversity policy is implemented and monitored in admissions to ensure this standard is being met.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure it contains accurate information for students about the requirements for progression and achievement through the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors reviewed the documentation prior to the visit. From the evidence provided, they were unable to determine a consistent and clear assessment strategy for individual modules, or at each level of the programme. There appeared to be

inconsistency as to which assessments were eligible for compensation, though discussion at the visit clarified the validating body's definitions of 'elements' and 'components' in relation to this. The student handbook also refers to 'contained awards' on page 10 and states that these will be relevant to those students who have used the APL or APEL process. At the visit, the programme team confirmed the definition of contained awards as step-off or fall-back awards. However, the terminology found in student-facing documentation concerning compensation, progression and achievement throughout the programme may be unclear or misleading to students. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit the programme documentation to ensure that all resources available to support students as they progress through the programme are clear and accurate.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure it contains accurate information about policies and regulations that students will be subject to throughout the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors were provided with additional documentation at the visit relating to various policies and procedures, including a mapping document which stated whether the education provider or validating body's quality processes would be used for this programme, and copies of regulations relating to student discipline, complaints and fitness to practice. However, the visitors could not find these processes referenced in the student handbook or student-facing documents, and therefore were unclear as to how students are notified as to what procedures and regulations are in place. The visitors therefore require evidence to demonstrate that the regulations and policies students will be subject to, particularly fitness to practise and expectations of professional conduct, are clearly articulated or referenced in the programme documentation.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure it contains accurate information and is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for podiatrists / chiropodists.

**Reason:** The visitors reviewed the programme documentation prior to the visit and noted inaccuracies in the terminology used and references made to the HCPC. There were a number of references in the placement portfolio documents and handbooks to the 'HPC' and 'Health Professions Council'. All such references must be updated to the 'HCPC' or 'Health and Care Professions Council'. In addition, there was reference to the level of attendance expected of students in the student handbook (page 49), which implies that the HCPC requires students to attend all practical modules. The HCPC SETs outline that the education provider must determine appropriate attendance requirements for their programmes. The visitors considered such references to be inaccurate and potentially misleading to students. It was also noted by the visitors that overall there were limited references to the HCPC or the HCPC's publications in the student handbook or other student-facing documentation. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit the programme documentation to remove any instances

of inaccurate or out of date terminology throughout and ensure that students are well-informed of the regulatory setting for podiatrists / chiropodists.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide any documentation that is revised as a result of the validation process.

**Reason:** Discussion at the visit indicated the programme team may amend the programme specification, module descriptors, learning outcomes and assessments as part of the post visit process for the new validating body. If any changes are to be made the visitors will need to review them. The visitors therefore require the education provider to resubmit the programme documentation where changes are made, or confirm the previously submitted documentation is not subject to change. In this way the visitors can ensure that this SET is met.

### **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 programme team must provide clarification of the assessment strategy, including any compensation, progression and reassessment details throughout the programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation, the programme team provided links to the assessment regulations of the new validating body. However, the visitors were unable to find explicit confirmation in the documentation as to the progression criteria, reassessment or resubmission procedures, or other associated measures of achievement that would be in place for this programme specifically. The visitors were therefore unable to determine the progression and achievement requirements at each level of the programme. As referred to under SET 3.8, the visitors were also unable to determine which assessments would be eligible for compensation throughout the programme. They were therefore unable to determine whether students successfully completing the programme will have been assessed effectively to ensure that the standards of proficiency are met. The visitors therefore require further clarification and confirmation as to the assessment strategy that will be used throughout the programme. In this way they can ensure that this SET is met.

### **6.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.**

**Condition:** The programme team must provide clarification and final confirmation of the assessment strategy, to demonstrate how this will comply with the assessment regulations of the new validating body.

**Reason:** In the documentation, the programme team provided links to the assessment regulations at the new validating body. However, the visitors were unable to find explicit confirmation in the documentation as to the progression criteria, reassessment procedures or other associated measures of achievement that would be in place for this programme specifically. At the visit, the programme team discussed these issues with colleagues from the validating body, and the validating body set a number of conditions

for the assessment strategy. These included a review of compensation, components and elements and the use of resubmission throughout the programme. The visitors were therefore unable to determine at the visit that the programme is compliant with the validating body's assessment regulations and that this SET is met. They therefore require the education provider to explicitly document the assessment regulations that are in place at each stage of the programme.

#### **6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.**

**Condition:** The education provider must submit any revised module descriptors for the programme or confirm that the previously submitted module descriptors are not subject to change.

**Reason:** As detailed in the reasons for SET 3.8 and 6.2, discussion at the visit indicated the programme team may amend the module descriptors, including assessment of learning outcomes, as part of the post visit process for the new validating body. If any changes are to be made to the module descriptors, the visitors will need to review them to ensure changes will not adversely affect the assessment of the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to resubmit the programme module descriptors if any changes are made, or confirm the previously submitted module descriptors are not subject to change.

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

**Condition:** The programme team must ensure programme documentation clearly articulates the requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

**Reason:** As stated in the condition under SET 6.2, the programme team provided links in the documentation to the assessment regulations at the new validating body. However, the visitors were unable to find explicit confirmation in the documentation as to the progression criteria, any module prerequisites, reassessment procedures or other associated measures of achievement that would be in place for this programme specifically. The visitors were therefore unable to determine the progression and achievement requirements at each level of the programme, what the policy was for trailing failed modules across years, or how reassessment attempts would be managed where students had not achieved all of the learning outcomes, in practice or theory. At the visit, the programme team clarified with colleagues from the validating body that students would need to pass all modules (120 credits), in order to progress to the next level, and would not be permitted to trail modules unless there were mitigating circumstances. This requirement, as well as the resit or resubmission arrangements for failed assessments, must be clearly outlined in the programme documentation. As stated, discussions at the visit also indicated that the programme team may implement some changes to the assessment strategy. The visitors therefore require further clarity and confirmation in the documentation of the requirements for student progression and achievement throughout the programme.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors could therefore not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not enable them to be eligible to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding aegrotat awards and that this is accessible to students.

#### **6.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.**

**Condition:** The programme team must provide further evidence that there will be a clear appeals process available to students on the programme.

**Reason:** From a review of the programme documentation the visitors were unable to find reference to an appeals procedure. The visitors were provided with additional documentation at the visit relating to various policies and procedures, including a mapping document which stated whether the education provider or validating body's quality processes would be used for this programme. The mapping document states that the New College Durham 'Academic Complaints and Appeals Policy' will be updated to comply with the validating body regulations and processes. The visitors were provided with the validating body's complaints procedure, but were not provided with the procedure that will be used for students' right to appeal. The visitors were therefore not clear how a student can ask for a review of a decision made on their assessment, progression and achievement. The visitors require further information that clarifies the appeals procedure for students and details how students are told about the right to appeal to ensure this standard is met.

#### **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 clearly specify the criteria and procedures for the appointment of external examiners for the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner arrangements. However, this standard requires the assessment regulations to clearly articulate 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 appropriately registered with the HCPC. The visitors therefore require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the assessment regulations to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

## Recommendations

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should submit any changes to the summative assessment of students' clinical and practical skills through the HCPC major change process, to ensure that the assessment continues to be robust.

**Reason:** In discussions at the visit, the visitors heard how the practice placements are working well and that there is good collaboration between the practice placement educators and the education provider. It was confirmed that the placement educators provide formative feedback to students on placement and are able to input into the teaching that takes place at the education provider. The placement educators will be attending the clinics at New College Durham in the near future, and their involvement with several aspects of the programme is increasing. The visitors were content that this SET is met under the current arrangements, however discussions indicated that there may be a move towards placement educators being responsible for the summative assessment of students in placement. This change would need to be reviewed by the HCPC to ensure that the placement educators have the relevant experience to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment of students in placement.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should submit any changes to the summative assessment of students' clinical and practical skills through the HCPC major change process, to ensure that the assessment continues to be robust.

**Reason:** In discussions at the visit, the visitors heard how the practice placements are working well and that there is good collaboration between the practice placement educators and the education provider. It was confirmed that the placement educators provide formative feedback to students on placement and are able to input into the teaching that takes place at the education provider. The placement educators will be attending the clinics at New College Durham in the near future, and their involvement with several aspects of the programme is increasing. The visitors were content that this SET is met under the current arrangements, however discussions indicated that there may be a move towards placement educators being responsible for the summative assessment of students in placement. This change would need to be reviewed by the HCPC to ensure that the placement educators are given sufficient training in the assessment methods to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment of students in placement.

Catherine Smith  
Paul Blakeman