

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	New College Durham
Validating body / Awarding body	The Open University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Podiatry
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Chiropodist / podiatrist Prescription only medicines – administration (for chiropodists / podiatrists) Prescription only medicines – sale / supply (for chiropodists / podiatrists)
Date of visit	28 – 29 March 2017

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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. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'chiroprapist' 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 24 August 2017. At the Committee meeting on 24 August 2017, the programme was the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards for prescribing for education providers and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards for prescribing for all prescribers. 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 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 considered the validation of the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – the Prescription Only Medicine Certificate and the Certificate in Local Anaesthesia.

The validating body, the professional body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with a chair supplied by the validating body and a secretary provided 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 and role of HCPC visitors	Andrew Hill (Chiropodist / podiatrist) Sheila Needham (Lay visitor) James Pickard (Chiropodist / podiatrist)
HCPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Niall Gooch
Proposed student numbers	30 per cohort, 1 cohort per year
First approved intake	September 2013
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2017
Chair	Sheila Counihan (Open University)
Secretary	Catherine Storey (New College Durham)
Members of the joint panel	Sheila Counihan (Open University) Craig Gwynne (Open University) Andrea Jones (Open University) Peter Roberts (Open University) Helen McCreeth (Open University) Alison Hart (College of Podiatry) Stuart Baird (College of Podiatry) Penny Renwick (College of Podiatry)

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"/>
Service users and carers	<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 satisfied 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 the relevant 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 four SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. 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 can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that their relationship with the new validating body will provide stability for the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation and from discussions at the visit that the programme's validating body would be changing from Teesside University to the Open University (OU). This is the third change of validating body for the education provider in the last ten years. The visitors considered that if there were to be further similar changes in the near future, this could create uncertainty about the future of the programme and so undermine its stability and viability. The visitors received verbal reassurances from representatives of the OU, who were in attendance to validate the programme, that the OU had a firm commitment to the programme for the foreseeable future, and the senior team reported that they wanted a long-term relationship with the OU. However, the visitors were not able to see a copy of a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding between the OU and New College Durham, concerning the OU's commitment to the programme. They therefore require evidence of such an agreement. In this way the visitors can be satisfied that the programme will continue to have a secure place in the NCD business plan.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that students have an opportunity during their clinical practice to integrate learning from the prescription-only medicine modules.

Reason: The visitors were able to have discussions with students and some staff at the placement setting, from which they did not see evidence that the students who had completed the prescription-only medicine certificates had an opportunity to observe the use of such medicines by qualified podiatrists with an annotation on the HCPC Register for prescription-only medicine (sale and supply). The visitors considered that this lack of opportunity to observe qualified tutors provide such medications might impair the students' ability, on completion of the programme, to meet the standards of proficiency for Chiropodists / Podiatrists. They therefore require the education provider to demonstrate how they will ensure that students have such opportunities. In this way the visitors can be satisfied that students' clinical practice is informed by the most relevant knowledge about use of medicines.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that, across the programme modules, assessments are clearly aligned to learning outcomes.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were able to look at the module descriptors in the programme documentation. However, in the descriptor for the elective module, they were not able to see learning outcomes against which students could be able to measure their work, and so could not be certain that all learning outcomes were being appropriately measured. In discussions with students, one student with dyslexia reported that they had found the mapping of learning outcomes hard to understand. The

visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure that for each module, the assessments are clearly aligned to the programme learning outcomes. In this way the visitors will be able to be satisfied that all students who pass each module are meeting the learning outcomes.

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

Condition: The education provider must amend programme documentation to make a clear statement to students that attaining 360 credits and the BSc (Hons) will lead to eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the programme documentation there were a number of statements explaining that step-off qualifications on the programme would not lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration. However, they did not see evidence that students were informed that successful completion of the BSc (Hons) would lead to eligibility to apply for registration. They considered that this might lead students to being unsure of how exactly they could achieve and progress within the programme. Therefore they require the education provider to include in documentation a clear statement that attaining the BSc (Hons) provides eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC. In this way the visitors can be satisfied that students will have a clear idea of what they need to attain to be eligible to apply for HCPC registration.

Recommendations

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to monitor staff workload, and the balance between the staff's administrative, academic and teaching duties, to ensure that staff are able to continue to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team and senior management, the visitors were satisfied that the programme was effectively managed and that administrative support was in place. However, they considered that the programme team were operating near capacity and that if, for example, staff members left the department, then the ability of the remaining staff to deliver an effective programme might be impaired. They therefore suggest that the education provider closely monitor the pressures on staff time in order to avoid any impairment of the staff's ability to deliver an effective programme.

3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to develop service user and carer involvement by building on current service user involvement and integrating service user and carer feedback into curriculum development.

Reason: From discussions with service users and carers, the visitors were satisfied that the standard was met. A service users' forum has been created and there has been some service user involvement in the admissions process. All students have frequent interaction with service users and carers in clinical work throughout the programme, at the New College podiatry clinics at Bishop's Auckland and Framwellgate Moor, so the service users and carers are able to give some feedback to programme staff about student performance, achievement and attitude. However, the visitors did not see evidence of formal and systematic feedback about the programme from service users and carers to the programme team, or any means by which service user and carer feedback might be used in curriculum development. They therefore suggest that the education provider continue to develop their existing service user and carer involvement, including the service users' forum and service user involvement with admissions, and that they consider formalising feedback from service users and using that feedback for curriculum development.

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 its work to ensure that all students have access to scalpel work on placement.

Reason: From discussions with students, the visitors became aware that one placement provider – County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust (CD&DT) – had a policy in place preventing students on all levels of study from using scalpels while on placement. The visitors heard from the senior team that they were aware of this issue and had taken steps to ensure that all students had sufficient access to scalpel work to meet the standards of proficiency, i.e. giving students opportunities to do scalpel work in the podiatry clinics operated by New College at Bishop's Auckland and Framwellgate

Moor. The programme team also reported that they had been in negotiations with the Trust to have the policy changed, and suggested that progress was now more likely after personnel changes at the Trust. The visitors considered that while the CD&DT policy was potentially problematic, especially as students on the programme remain with the same Trust for all their placements across the three years, the standard was met. The programme team take steps to ensure access to scalpel work for the small number of students who cannot access it on placement. However, to ensure that the standard continues to be met, the visitors suggest to the programme team that they continue their efforts to ensure parity of access to scalpel work on placement.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider using feedback from practice placement providers in curriculum development.

Reason: From discussions with staff at placement locations, the visitors were satisfied that the standard was met. However, they did not see evidence of opportunities for regular or systematic feedback from placement providers and staff about the programme itself. They therefore suggest that the education provider develop opportunities for placement providers and staff to provide input into curriculum development.

Andrew Hill
Sheila Needham
James Pickard