Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Newcastle University
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsychol)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	5 – 6 July 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 'Clinical 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 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 bod, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Sabiha Azmi (Clinical psychologist) Steve Davies (Clinical psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	14 per cohort
First approved intake	January 1995
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Ashley Wilson (Newcastle University)
Secretary	Simon Meacher (Newcastle University)
Members of the joint panel	Andrew Thompson (British Psychological Society) Simon Eltringham (British Psychological Society) Barbara Mason (British Psychological Society) Molly Ross (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	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐
Other evidence: relevant policies, procedures and regulations; curriculum timetables and documentation; various programme committee and meeting minutes; programme review documentation; placement documentation; admission procedure documentation; physical and electronic resource information.	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 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

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure new placement settings are initially approved and effectively monitored.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated how the programme team work collaboratively with placements. All placements used are long standing existing placements and have been contractually fulfilled since 2003. Discussion indicated the annual placement audits, placement meetings, trainee feedback and liaison committee meetings are how the education provider maintained the relationships and monitored the placements. These monitoring arrangements are held and agreed within the placement contractual agreements and the individual trainee placement contracts. The visitors were confident the relationships in place with the current placements were strong and viable. The visitors are aware of the wider context to psychology and are aware in the future new placements may need to be sourced, they are also aware that when sourcing new placements the programme team may need to look outside of the traditional NHS settings. The visitors were concerned the education provider may not have policies and procedures in place for approving and monitoring new placements thereby ensuring the clinical supervisor and clinical environment are suitable, appropriately safe and supportive for the trainees to work with. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team would ensure new placement settings are approved and effectively monitored.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure clinical supervisors undertake regular refresher training.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated that the programme team arranges regular initial and refresher training sessions for clinical supervisors. Discussion with the clinical supervisors and the programme team indicated that prior to working with students the training needs of a clinical supervisor would be reviewed and appropriate training would be arranged for them. Discussion with the clinical supervisors indicated the placement managers received attendance lists from the refresher sessions which they used to follow up and ensure clinical supervisors had undertaken training or if not were then scheduled in for refresher training. Discussion with the programme team indicated they took the attendance lists for the refresher training however did not review them or use them to highlight clinical supervisors who had not attended refresher training and who may need prompting to undertake training. The visitors were concerned there was the possibility of gaps between the placement managers reviewing refresher training attendance and the programme team's responsibility to do this. The visitors suggest a system whereby the programme team and the placement managers work together to review refresher training

attendance to ensure all clinical supervisors receive updates to their supervision training, programme updates or placement management updates. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team ensure clinical supervisors undertake regular refresher training.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the education provider expand the information given in the advertising materials.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the advertising materials and noted the programme website information and the programme factsheets available state "offers of places subsequently made will be subject to: an enhanced criminal records check, medical clearance and satisfactory references." Although this is sufficient to meet the standard of giving applicants information about the medical clearance and criminal conviction check, the visitors suggest the education provider expand on this information. The visitors felt further information could be provided to explain how each case is assessed and to highlight that efforts to ensure potential trainee disability needs and adjustments could be made where possible. The visitors felt that this would encourage those applicants who may have specific needs on health grounds or who are concerned about the criminal conviction check and whether the course may help them.

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.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team formulate a strategy to ensure the consistent implementation of equality and diversity approaches and so widen the access to the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team and senior team, the visitors noted evidence of an equality and diversity policy and evidence that the programme team are considering various ideas for widening access to this programme. The visitors suggest the programme team consider formulating an equality and diversity strategy at a programme level to ensure the work that is currently being deliberated upon around equality and diversity is conducted in a consistent, transparent and measured way.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team consider ways to monitor trainee's attendance alongside the occurrence of 'opting-out' of teaching sessions.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included information about the consent protocols in place. If needed, trainees could 'opt out' of particular

sensitive or personal aspects of the programme and excuse themselves from the session. The visitors were aware that missing out on certain sessions by using the consent procedures may cause problems, particularly if this was a repeated incident and was not picked up by the programme team. The visitors suggest the programme team consider ways to monitor trainee's attendance alongside the occurrence of 'opting-out' of teaching sessions to be able to manage absences effectively.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team consider ways to ensure trainee's attendance at placement is monitored.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the programme has a robust attendance policy at the education provider with careful monitoring of trainee attendance. Programme documentation clearly highlights the amount of days per week needed for each placement (p4, Placement Handbook) and the requirement for trainees to inform the programme team of absence from any part of the programme (p25, Programme Handbook – draft for 2012 intake). The visitors felt this indicated it was the trainee's responsibility to inform all parties of any absence. The visitors felt there was the potential here for trainee's to not inform all parties of absence and for it to therefore go unnoticed. The visitors recommend the programme team consider ways to ensure that absences whilst on placement are communicated to the programme team for them to be able to manage absences effectively.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team formulate a strategy to formally embed service users within the programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated service users contribute in a variety of ways to the programme, through the admission procedures and through some teaching. The visitors noted although service users did contribute towards the programme delivery there was no standard system for considering how and when to involve service users. The visitors felt that service users are a valuable resource for the programme and could be further embedded into the programme by having a formal strategic plan for involving service users.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team consider reviewing the programme to further emphasise the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: From the visitors' review of the programme, programme documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors were satisfied the programme would ensure trainees understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors did note that there were areas of the programme that they considered could be enhanced by including information about the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and making reference to the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students. The visitors recommend the programme team review the programme and consider where they can further emphasise the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors suggest this would strengthen the students' understanding of the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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.**

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team continue to ensure they will receive and review placement competencies.

Reason: Discussion with the programme team indicated the trainee's placement contract and placement record was completed at the end of placement and then taken to the following placement. At the beginning of the new placement the forms would then be used to identify any gaps in the trainee's demonstrated competencies. The forms are agreed and signed by the trainee and the clinical supervisors at the end and beginning of each placement. The programme team receives copies of the forms in order to review the competencies being fulfilled at one placement and planned to be reached at the next. The visitors note how important it is for the active review of the competencies to be undertaken in order to ensure the contracts are appropriately focusing on areas of the competencies that need addressing. The visitors suggest the programme team continue to ensure this is being appropriately undertaken.

Sabiha Azmi
Steve Davies