

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Validating body / Awarding body	Oxford University
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (D.Clin.Psych)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	10 – 11 May 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 '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 7 July 2011. At the Committee meeting on 25 August 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 as the practitioner psychologist profession came onto the register in 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 as the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The professional body and the HPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair, 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 body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Harry Brick (Clinical psychologist) Robert Stratford (Educational psychologist)
HPC executive officers (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	15
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 September 2011
Chair	John Hall (Oxford Brookes University)
Members of the joint panel	Theresa Powell (British Psychological Society) Paul Camic (British Psychological Society) Simon Eltringham (British Psychological Society) Lauren Ison (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	<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 have ongoing approval confirmed.

The visitors agreed that 56 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining one SET.

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

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 provide a clear statement in the programme documentation to identify the level of English language proficiency required for successful application to the programme.

Reason: Having scrutinised the programme documentation the visitors were satisfied that the programme applied selection and entry criteria to ensure that successful applicants have a good command of reading, writing and spoken English. However, the visitors were unable to identify how the programme clearly articulated their English language proficiency requirement to potential applicants. As this requirement was not clearly articulated this could lead to an applicant successfully appealing a decision not to let them onto the programme. Therefore the visitors require the programme team to include a clear statement to articulate the proficiency of English an applicant would have to demonstrate in order to successfully apply to the programme. This will ensure that a potential applicant will have all of the information they require to make an informed choice about applying and taking up an offer of a place on a programme.

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 provide a clear statement in the programme documentation to inform potential applicants that the programme does not accredit prior experiential learning.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were satisfied that the programme does not accredit prior experiential learning (APEL). However, the visitors could only identify a clear statement regarding this in the standards of education and training mapping, not in the programme documentation or advertising materials. As this policy regarding APEL is not included in the programme documentation, this could potentially lead to an appeal and an unsuitable applicant gaining a place on the programme. Therefore the visitors require the programme team to include a clear statement that the programme does not accredit prior experiential learning. This will ensure that a potential applicant will have all of the information they require to make an informed choice about applying to the programme and that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

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 education provider should consider how best to continue the work to address identified equality and diversity issues such as the disparity in the gender of students on the programme.

Reason: In discussion at the visit the visitors noted that equality and diversity information is collected and collated by the clearing house website which handles the initial applications to the programme. This information is fed back to the programme team and actions were being taken as a result of the data provided. Therefore the visitors were satisfied that the programme continues to meet this standard. However the programme team did identify that work was still continuing to address issues of equality and diversity in the student population of the programme, particularly to address the gender disparity of applicants. The visitors recommend that the programme team continue this work to ensure as great a diversity of student population on the programme as possible.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how best to support practice placement educators in ensuring that the trusts providing practice placements are providing sufficient resources to students while on practice placement.

Reason: The visitors noted in the information provided, and in discussions at the visit, that the programme has in place approval and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that there are sufficient resources on practice placements to support students' learning. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that the programme meets this standard. However, in discussion with the practice placement providers and educators, it was identified that NHS trust budget constraints were affecting the availability of resources for students on some placements. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team continue to work alongside practice placement educators to ensure that the trusts providing practice placements make sufficient resources available to support students. In this way any shortfall in a trust's provision of resources for students can be mitigated through joint support from practice placement educators and the programme team.

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 to continue the work, currently being undertaken, to best utilise the feedback from students regarding their practice placements.

Reason: In discussion with the trainees and with the programme team, it was made clear to the visitors that there is a comprehensive student feedback system for practice placements. This feedback is utilised by the programme team as an integral part of the approval and monitoring of practice placements. The visitors are therefore happy that the programme continues to meet this standard. The practice placement educators did, however, state that further feedback from students regarding their placement experience would be useful for their own professional development. When this issue was raised with the programme team it was clear that work was being undertaken to better utilise student feedback. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team continue their work to develop the use of feedback and investigate how best to provide practice placement educators with more information regarding students' placement experience.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider ways to ensure that all clinical supervisors new to supervision are adequately trained and that all supervisors new to the programme are appropriately orientated.

Reason: From the discussions at the visit and in the programme information provided, the visitors noted that the programme has a comprehensive training offering available to practice placement educators. It was also made clear that any new educators would be expected to undertake the initial training provided in order to supervise a student. Therefore the visitors were satisfied that the programme continues to meet this standard. However, in discussion with the students it was made clear that some practice placement educators who did not undertake the initial training were less able to supervise students than those that had. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team consider ways to ensure that all practice placement educators new to supervision undertake appropriate supervisor training. They also suggest that the programme team consider ensuring that all practice placement educators new to the programme should be appropriately orientated to the requirements of this particular programme. In this way the programme team will be able to ensure an even greater equivalence of student experience across all of the various practice placements.

Robert Stratford
Harry Brick