

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Royal Holloway, University of London
Validating body / Awarding body	University of London
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	6 – 7 March 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 10 May 2012. At the Committee meeting on 10 May 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 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 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 education provider and the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Ruth Baker (Clinical psychologist) Sandy Wolfson (Sport and exercise psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ben Potter
HPC observer	David Christopher
Proposed student numbers	28
First approved intake	January 1997
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Rosemary Deem (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Secretary	Charlotte Verney (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Members of the joint panel	Malcom Adams (British Psychological Society) Carol Martin (British Psychological Society) Lucy Kerry (British Psychological Society) Geraldine Kavanagh (British Psychological Society) Marina Beck (Royal Holloway, University of London)

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 condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 57 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 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.

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 ensure that applicants to the programme are aware of any potential additional expenditure associated with the completion of the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were clear that students who are admitted to the programme will become employees of the Camden and Islington Foundation NHS Trust. The visitors were also clear that as a consequence of this students can claim reasonable costs for travel to undertake periods of experience at practice placement sites. However, in discussion with the students the visitors were made aware of a recent change to the policy regarding the claiming of these expenses. Costs of travel would now only be covered beyond the normal travelling distance between a student's place of residence and the education provider. As several students live in central London they articulated that this has left them unable to claim travel expenses for travel to some practice placement sites. The visitors articulated that this policy was clearly set out in the documentation available to current students but they were unclear as to how this policy is communicated to applicants. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team communicates the implications of this policy to applicants prior to them making a choice about whether to take up a place on the programme. In this way the visitors can determine how applicants are fully informed before they make their decision and how this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how best to support the work being done to capture the training experience of practice placement educators on the existing database of practice placements.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team it was made clear that they expected all practice placement educators to undertake the appropriate practice placement educator training which is provided. The visitors also noted that the programme team makes a note of those practice placement educators who have attended the initial training as well as the refresher training for more experienced educators. The visitors were therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, in further discussion with the programme team it was articulated that the information regarding a practice placement educators' training was captured in a system outside the main 'ACE' database. This had the implications of increasing the workload for the members of the programme team who were organising and arranging practice placements. In response to this the programme team have identified what needs to be done in order to include the practice placement educators' training data but that this has not yet been able to be undertaken. The visitors recommend that the education provider considers how best to support this continuing work in developing the 'ACE' database. In this way it may benefit from a reduction in staff time allocated to the arrangement of practice placements and an increase in time for staff to support the programme.

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 how best to inform the HPC if a change in regulations governing the programme changes the way students are assessed and ensures that they meet the standards of proficiency.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided prior to the visit the visitors were satisfied that the postgraduate teaching regulations which govern the programme provide a framework for the programmes assessment strategy. In this way the regulations help ensure that students who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for clinical psychologists. The visitors are therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, in discussion with the senior team, and with the programme team, it was suggested that the programme may consider being governed by the postgraduate research regulations to better reflect the research aspects of the programme. While these discussions suggested that this decision was not imminent the visitors recommend that the programme team consider how best to inform the HPC if this affects how the programme continues to meet this standard. If the change to postgraduate research regulations affects how the programme continues to apply the assessment strategy in its current form this could affect how the programme ensures that students who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs for clinical psychologists. If this is the case the HPC would need to be informed through either the annual monitoring or major change processes.

Ruth Baker
Sandy Wolfson