

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	The Smae Institute
Programme name	Diploma In Prescription Only Medicines for Podiatric Practice
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant entitlements	Prescription only medicine
Date of visit	9 May 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 as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. 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 an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Catherine Smith (Chiropodist / Podiatrist) Paul Blakeman (Chiropodist / Podiatrist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	15
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Steven West (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Secretary	Alison Barnard (University of the West of England, Bristol)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports prior to the visit as the programme is new.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the Diploma in Local Anaesthesia for Podiatry Practice, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 the standard of proficiency (SOP) for this entitlement.

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 be approved.

The visitors agreed that 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for 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 did not make any 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 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 submit evidence that the information available to applicants will provide comprehensive information for them to make an informed choice about whether to apply for or take up a place on the programme.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation prior to the visit, but were not provided with any documents that would be used in the admissions or application procedure to inform students about the programme. At the visit, the programme team articulated that there would be a website to inform people about the programme, and that applicants would fill out a questionnaire. The information on this questionnaire would be reviewed by the programme team and any suitable candidates would then be invited to an open day, where they would receive further information about the programme. However, there was no evidence submitted to demonstrate what information would be covered on the website, through the questionnaire or at the open day. The visitors were therefore unable to ascertain how and when potential applicants would be notified as to the requirements of the programme, including criminal records checks, IT capability and occupational health declarations, as well as the financial implications associated with studying. The visitors therefore require to see the proposed documentation to be used in admissions procedures to ensure that applicants are given sufficient information to make an informed choice as to whether to take up a place on the programme.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence in the documentation as to the formal procedures in place for health requirements for applicants.

Reason: From the documentation, the visitors noted that the programme requires applicants to be registered with the HCPC, and the programme team therefore expect that all candidates will be aware of occupational health requirements for the profession. It is stated in the documentation that applicants are required to attend an open day, where their suitability for the programme will be discussed. The student handbook (page 14) also states that 'students should declare any health problems and illnesses from which they suffer prior to starting their modules'. At the visit, the visitors heard that the education provider encourages students to declare any occupational health circumstances that may affect their learning and progress through the programme in order for reasonable adjustments to be made. However, the visitors were not provided with evidence in the documentation as to a formal process for this. The visitors were therefore unclear as to what health requirements are in place for entry to the programme, and what the formal procedure is where health conditions are declared. They therefore require further evidence to ensure that this standard will be met.

3.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence demonstrating how students are informed of the mechanisms in place to support their welfare and wellbeing in all settings throughout the programme.

Reason: In discussions with the senior team and programme team, the visitors heard that they encourage regular contact from the students, particularly due to the distance learning delivery of the programme. For many of the processes and procedures students may have queries about, they are encouraged to contact the programme team, rather than referring to the resources available, for example the website or student handbook. However, the visitors could not see evidence that the students would be notified of a number of the resources available to support them in their studies, and could therefore not confirm that they were accessible to students. From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware of the student support mechanisms in place at the education provider, including a personal tutor system, financial advice and counseling service and a student complaints procedure. However, the visitors could not find these facilities referenced in the student handbook, and therefore were unclear as to how students are notified as to what is available. There are also formal procedures in place for students regarding extenuating circumstances and reassessment through the programme, which the visitors could not see clearly articulated to students. The visitors therefore require evidence to demonstrate that students are informed of the procedures and services available to support them through the programme.

Paul Blakeman
Catherine Smith