

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Birmingham
Programme name	Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists/Nurses/Physiotherapists/Podiatrists.
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant entitlements	Independent prescribing Supplementary prescribing
Date of visit	8 June 2016

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6
Recommendations.....	8

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 a protected title 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.

As well as approving educational programmes for people who want to join the Register, the HCPC also approve a small number of programmes for those already on the Register. The post-registration programmes we currently approve include supplementary prescribing programmes (for chiropodists / podiatrists, dietitians, radiographers and physiotherapists) and independent prescribing programmes (for chiropodists / podiatrists, physiotherapists, and therapeutic radiographers).

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 7 July 2016. At the Committee meeting on 25 August 2016, the programme was approved. 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 independent prescribers. 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 our standards for prescribing for education providers and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards for prescribing for all prescribers.

This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional bodies did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Nicola Carey (Independent prescriber) Alaster Rutherford (Independent prescriber)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Alex Urquhart
HCPC observer	Ben Potter
Proposed student numbers	25 per cohort, two cohorts per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2016
Chair	John Skelton (University of Birmingham)
Secretary	Sarah Turner (University of Birmingham)

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 standards for prescribing for education providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the standards for prescribing for all prescribers and / or independent prescribers	<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 the external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiners' report 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 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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists and the MSc Physiotherapy programmes 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 our standards for prescribing for education providers and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards for prescribing for all prescribers.

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 48 of the standards have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining two standards.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. Conditions are set when certain standards for prescribing have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a recommendation for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard for prescribing has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

A.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 is required to provide further evidence to demonstrate how the admissions procedures give the applicant the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the student handbook and application form which stated the admissions process and criteria for the programme. However, the visitors noted that the student handbook is a document that applicants would receive once they have been accepted onto the programme. From this evidence the visitors could not determine how a potential applicant would access the information they require, such as the admissions procedure and entry requirements, to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a programme. During the meeting with the programme team it was stated that the website would contain all the information required about the programme, however the website is currently under development and could therefore not be reviewed by the visitors. Without this information the visitors were unable to determine how the programme can meet this standard. The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates how the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require, including the admissions process and entry requirements, to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

A.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 is required to provide further evidence to demonstrate how the admissions procedures give the applicant the information they require on accreditation of prior (experiential) learning to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Reason: The visitors met with the programme team who stated that an applicant could not enter the programme through the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) process, the visitors noted that this information was not clear in the information available to potential applicants. Without this information the visitors were unable to determine how the programme can meet this standard. During the same meeting with the programme team it was stated that the website would contain all the information required about the programme, however the website is currently under development and could therefore not be reviewed by the visitors. Without this information the visitors were unable to determine how the programme can meet this standard. The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates how the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require, including the AP(E)L policy, to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

A.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 is required to provide further evidence to demonstrate how they communicate the requirements for completing the programme to potential applicants.

Reason: The visitors met with the programme team who stated that a student must complete the two modules consecutively in order to complete the programme and be eligible for registration with HCPC as an independent prescriber. As the two modules are separate entities it is important to be explicit that they must be completed as a single course of learning. However, the visitors were unable to locate where this information was stated in the evidence provided. Without seeing where this information is communicated in the programme documentation, the visitors could not determine how a potential applicant would access the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme. During the same meeting with the programme team it was stated that the website would contain all the information required about the programme, however the website is currently under development and could therefore not be reviewed by the visitors. Without this information the visitors were unable to determine how the programme can meet this standard. The visitors therefore require evidence which demonstrates how the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require, including the requirements for completing the programme, to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

B.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Condition: The education provider is required to provide further evidence to demonstrate that there is an appropriate student complaints process in place.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the student handbook which outlined the process for academic appeals. The visitors did not consider this process to be a student complaints process as it did not allow a student to make a complaint or raise a concern about the programme. When meeting with the students, the students stated that they have never had to make a complaint about the programme but if they did they would know to approach the programme team in the first instance. The programme team confirmed this and clarified that there is a university wide complaints process, which is outlined to students during the indication process. However, without reviewing a copy of the complaints process for this programme the visitors cannot make a judgement on this standard being met. In addition to this, without seeing where the complaints process is communicated in the programme documentation the visitors cannot see how all current and future students would have access to the complaints process. The visitors therefore require documentation which demonstrates a clear complaints process for the programme and how this is communicated to students.

Recommendations

B.15 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the education provider considers developing the involvement of service users and carers from a physiotherapist and podiatrist background.

Reason: In meeting this standard the visitors met with a representative from the Patient Engagement in Nursing (PEN) group who discussed their involvement in the design and development of the programme. The visitors were satisfied with this involvement in the programme and that the standards is met at a threshold level. However the visitors noted that the involvement came from a group with a specific focus on nursing, rather than a physiotherapist or podiatrist focus. As such the visitors recommend that the education provider considers further developing the involvement of service users and carers in the programme and to ensure that physiotherapist and podiatrist perspectives are incorporated in that service user involvement.

Nicola Carey
Alaster Rutherford