

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Brighton
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Podiatry
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Chiropodist / podiatrist
Date of visit	8 – 9 March 2017

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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. 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 the title '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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 25 May 2017. At the Committee meeting on 6 July 2017, 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 HCPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme management and resources. The programme was already approved by the HCPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that 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 education provider reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the MSc Podiatry. The education provider and the professional body participated in separate scrutiny of both programmes; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the BSc Podiatry only. A separate report exists for the MSc Podiatry. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Wendy Smith (Chiropodist / podiatrist) Diane Whitlock (Lay visitor) Sharon Wiener-Ogilvie (Chiropodist / podiatrist)
HCPC executive officer	Niall Gooch
HCPC observers	Adam Bird (Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council) Rachel Portelli (Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council)
Proposed student numbers	40 per cohort, 1 cohort per year
First approved intake	September 1993
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2017
Chair	Phil Mandy (University of Brighton)
Secretary	Rachel Quinn (University of Brighton)

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

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"/>
Service users and carers	<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 satisfied 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 the relevant 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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining five SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. 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 two recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally 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: Prior to the start of the application process, the education provider must ensure that appropriate information about the programme is provided to potential applicants, allowing them to make an informed decision about taking up a place on the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team that information about what was required of applicants before they could take up a place on the programme, such as passing an enhanced DBS check and an occupational health check, was only communicated in materials available at selection days or in the handbook given to students when they started the programme. The visitors considered that, from the evidence provided, the timing of the provision of the information could impact on the ability of applicants to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme. They noted that a number of the applicants were potentially disrupting existing careers to apply to the programme, and so may require the information as soon as possible to be able to limit their uncertainty about the requirements of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence as to what information is provided to applicants and at what points in the application process this information would be provided. In this way the visitors will be able to determine how the education provider ensures that applicants have all the information they require in order to make informed decisions about taking up a place on the 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: Prior to the start of the application process, the education provider must ensure that there is clear information for applicants to access which details the education provider's requirements and expectations concerning prior (experiential) learning.

Reason: The visitors could not see, in the evidence provided, clear information for applicants which describes the education provider's entry requirements for people coming to the programme on a non-standard route, for example after time away from formal education. In discussion with students the visitors were told that approximately 30 per cent of the students on the programme were mature students or career-changers. The visitors were also made aware, in their reading of the documentary evidence provided, that there is an education provider recognition of prior (experiential) learning (RP(E)L) policy, which can be utilised by applicants to this programme. However the visitors could not see, from the evidence provided, how information about the RP(E)L policy is provided to applicants to the programme. Given the cohort of students, and potential applicants, the visitors felt that it was important for applicants to be given clear information about the RP(E)L criteria they would have to meet in order to be offered a place on the programme. As such the visitors could not see how applicants were being given all of the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme. The visitors therefore require

further evidence to demonstrate how the programme admissions information clearly indicates what the requirements for admission to the programme are and what the requirements of the RP(E)L policy are.

3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how service users and carers are involved in the programme, why this involvement is appropriate and how service users and carers can feed back to the programme team about their experience with students.

Reason: The visitors were able to talk to service users and carers about their involvement with students, and found that all students had frequent interaction with service users and carers in clinical work throughout the programme. The visitors were made aware that this interaction with service users and carers was at the Leaf Hospital, the podiatry clinic that is run by the programme and where students treat service users and carers, gaining practical experience in a placement setting. The visitors also learned from discussion with service users and carers that they had some involvement with objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs). However, the visitors could not see in the evidence provided any records of this involvement, any records of feedback provided, evidence of how feedback was used, or any formal mechanisms for feedback about students or the programme, from service users and carers to the programme team. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of service users and carers' involvement in the programme, particularly in regard to how feedback from service users and carers is incorporated into the assessment and the monitoring of the programme. This evidence should detail how service users and carers are involved, why this involvement is appropriate for this programme, why the service users and carers involved are appropriate for the programme and what support mechanisms the education provider has to support this involvement. In this way the visitors can determine how the programme can meet this standard.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that a process is in place for ensuring that enough placement practice educators are available, and that they are appropriately qualified and experienced.

Reason: The visitors were able to have extensive discussions about the practice placements with the programme team and practice placement educators. The visitors noted that there were clearly good working relationships between individuals on the programme team and those responsible for practice placements, and that there were enough placements for the students with appropriately qualified and experienced staff. However, the visitors were not able to see evidence of agreements between the programme team and the placement providers being formalised in writing, which would help to ensure continuity and stability of approval and monitoring in the event of personnel changes on the programme team or at the placement locations. They therefore require the education provider to provide evidence of the process for monitoring of placement staff's qualifications and experience being set down in writing.

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.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve in each module ensure that students are adequately assessed so that they can meet the standards of proficiency.

Reason: From reading the module descriptors in the documentation, in certain modules the visitors were not able to see which learning outcomes were assessed by which instrument of assessment. For example in 'Clinical Practice 2' appeared to have its first learning outcome assessed by two different methods of assessment, meaning that the learning outcome could be met even if a student had failed one of the methods of assessment. A similar overlap of learning outcomes also occurs in 'Clinical Practice 4'. The visitors considered that this could lead to students passing modules even though they had not met all the expected learning outcomes. They therefore require the education provider to review the module description to link all learning outcomes to a specific instrument of assessment. In this way the visitors will be able to see how students will be required to meet all the learning outcomes of a module.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that there is clear information in the programme documentation which states that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided the visitors were aware that the education provider does award aegrotat awards when "...the student might have obtained their award had it not been for illness or another valid cause" (General Examination and Assessment Regulations, section D, part 8). However, in evidence provided the visitors could not see a clear statement which clearly articulated that an aegrotat award could not be used to apply to the HCPC Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence as to how the education provider ensures that there is clear information provided to students that any aegrotat award would not provide them with eligibility to apply to the Register.

Recommendations

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Recommendation: The programme team should revisit the programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is correct.

Reason: The visitors noted a number of small errors in the documentation, for example references to 'the HPC' rather than 'the HCPC', and duplication and omissions in the documents mapping learning outcomes and assessment methods. The visitors therefore suggest that the education provider review the programme documentation for accuracy, and update or revise where necessary.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing documents mapping assessment methods and learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that appropriate assessment methods were being used to measure the learning outcomes and therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, they considered that it was not always clear in the various mapping documents which learning outcomes were linked to which assessment methods, and so they suggest to the education provider that they should review these documents with a view to providing more clarity. In this way they may be better able to link key elements of the assessment strategy with the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.

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