Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Central Lancashire
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Physiotherapist
Date of visit	24 – 25 April 2012

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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 'Physiotherapist' 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 23 August 2012. At the Committee meeting on 23 August 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme management and resources, curriculum and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HPC 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 validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy full time programme. The education provider, 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on this programme only. A separate report exists for the full time programme. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Joanna Jackson (Physiotherapist) Fleur Kitsell (Physiotherapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	David Christopher
Proposed student numbers	A maximum of 5 each year
First approved intake	September 2008
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Janice Wardle (University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN))
Secretary	Suzanne Juniper (University of Central Lancashire)
Members of the joint panel	Robin Richardson (Internal Panel Member) Julie Cummings (Internal Panel Member) Tracey McGlone (External Panel Member) Liz Hancock (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP)) Nina Patterson (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists)

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	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐
Joint HPC approval, CSP accreditation and UCLAN validation event appendices	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

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 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 4 SETs.

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 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 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 the programme advertising material published on the education provider's website is updated and provides comprehensive information for potential applicants to make an informed choice about whether to apply for or take up a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted that the programme handbook included useful information about costs associated with the programme. However, it was not clear how potential applicants would receive this information. Visitors also noted an incorrect reference on the website to the requirement for registration with the Vetting and Barring Scheme. In discussions with the programme team the visitors were informed that information about associated costs was made known to all applicants in presentations at open days and as part of the application process. The programme team also confirmed that the website was under development. The visitors therefore require the education provider to update the programme website to ensure that it provides comprehensive and up to date information that will assist potential applicants to decide whether to apply for or take up a place on the programme.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide a revised set of module descriptors which demonstrate how the programme's learning outcomes ensure that all those who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors considered the mapping document which provided evidence about where the standards of proficiency (SOPs) were covered in the programme. Discussions with the programme team revealed the need to amend the learning outcomes and assessment methods for some of the modules as a result of the education provider's validation process. The visitors were particularly concerned about module PU1005 Physiotherapeutic Skills, which they considered key in meeting standard 2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully. It was not evident to the visitors how the content and learning outcomes for this module would ensure that this standard will be met. Because some of the module descriptors would change as a result of the education provider's validation process, this made it difficult for the visitors to gain an overview of how the learning outcomes for the programme would ensure that all the SOPs were met. The visitors therefore need to see a revised set of module descriptors for the programme, which demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that all those who complete the programme meet all the SOPs.

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 provide a revised set of module descriptors which demonstrate how the programme's assessment methods ensure that all those who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency.

Reason: The visitors noted that the SOPs mapping document provided prior to the visit referred to a Common Assessment Tool used by five education providers in the North West of England to assess clinical practice. This tool had been mapped against the SOPs and, as a result, the SOPs mapping document provided prior to the visit included a statement that 'Therefore the assessment of Physiotherapy practice provides evidence for ALL SoPs and this is not indicated against each SoP in this proforma'. However, from a review of the module descriptors and discussions with the programme team, the visitors were concerned about how the programme ensured that all students had met the SOPs and, in particular, standard 2b.4 'be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully'. In discussion of the module descriptors the visitors were unclear how the proposed forty five minute practical assessment for module PU1005 'Physiotherapeutic Skills (Neuromusculoskeletal)' could ensure that all the required learning objectives, and hence relevant SOPs, for this module had been demonstrated. The programme team explained that the proposed practical assessment would validate skills by sampling them and that students would be expected to prepare to be assessed on the full range of skills relevant to this module. The visitors require further evidence as to how the assessment would ensure that standard 2b.4 was fully demonstrated. Because some of the module descriptors would change as a result of the education provider's validation process, this made it difficult for the visitors to gain an overview of how the programme would ensure that all those who completed it successfully would meet the SOPs. The visitors therefore need to see a revised set of module descriptors for the programme, which demonstrate how the assessment methods ensure that all the SOPs are met by those who complete the programme.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy specific to the programme. The education provider provided further documentation relating to its external examiner system. However, it was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the Register. The visitors were satisfied that there was a system of external

examiners in place and were content with the current external examiner for the programme. However, the visitors need to see evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendation

4.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how it will ensure that students on this programme have an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills relevant to continuing professional development covered in the module 'Issues in Professional Practice 1' at a relevant stage in the programme.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met. However, from a consideration of the programme documentation provided prior to the visit they noted that the module 'Issues in Professional Practice 1' played an important role in developing knowledge and skills relating to the recording and use of evidence for continuing professional development and thereby supported the development of autonomous and reflective thinking. The programme handbook indicated that students on the full time programme would take this module in Year 1, but those on the part time programme would not take the module until Year 2 and the visitors sought clarification as to the logic of this sequencing. The programme team noted the apparent anomaly and undertook to give further consideration to this issue. The visitors suggested that the programme team give consideration to how students on this programme could develop knowledge and skills relevant to continuing professional development at an appropriate stage on the programme, which would support the development of autonomous and reflective thinking.

Joanna Jackson
Fleur Kitsell