
Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Chester
Programme name	MA Art Therapy
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Arts therapist
Relevant modality / domain	Art therapy
Date of visit	11 – 12 August 2010

Contents

Contents.....	1
Executive summary	2
Introduction	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence.....	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions	6

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 'Art therapist' 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 9 December 2010. At the Committee meeting on 9 December 2010, 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 HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HPC 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 HPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programmes at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered a different programme – MA Art Therapy – Full Time. A separate visitor report exists for this programme.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Janek Dubowski (Art Therapist) Simon Willoughby-Booth (Art Therapist)
HPC executive officer	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	20
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 February 2011
Chair	Jane Martin (University of Chester)
Secretary	Roger Whiteley (University of Chester)

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

The HPC did not review External examiners reports for the last two years prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

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"/>

The HPC met with students from the Certificate in Therapeutic Application of Art, 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 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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 39 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 18 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.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme.

Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

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 revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials to ensure that the terminology in use is reflective of current statutory regulation.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation that there were several instances of incorrect or out of date terminology in reference to the current environment of statutory regulation. They highlighted that on a number of occasions the HPC was referred to as accrediting the programme. The HPC approves programmes and does not offer accreditation. The visitors also noted that the education provider states that the HPC requires students to undertake personal therapy during the course of the MA programme. The HPC makes no such stipulation. The use of this language may mislead applicants and not provide them with sufficient information to make an informed decision about whether to take up a place on the programme. The visitors therefore require the documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology to ensure that this standard can be met.

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 revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials to clearly state the length of the practice placement and the geographical area in which placements will be based.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team the visitors clarified when and where students' practice placements would take place. However, when reviewing the documentation the visitors noted that it was not clear exactly when and where the practice placement element of the programme would take place. This lack of information may mean that students can not make an informed decision about whether to take up a place on the programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation including advertising material to clearly highlight to potential applicants the length and structure of the practice placement. This information should also indicate the geographical area in which placements will be based to make sure that this standard can be met.

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure that the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) entry criteria are clear.

Reason: From a review of the documentation submitted and from discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the education provider makes reference to the HPC standard of proficiency 1b.3 outlining the English communication requirements for registrants. However the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider is utilising this to set the English-language requirements for entry to the programme and how this is communicated to applicants. If the education provider is using the HPC standard of proficiency 1b.3 as its own entry criteria then it must clearly state this to ensure all potential applicants are informed at the point of entry. If the education provider does not use the HPC standard of proficiency 1b.3 as the English-language requirement for entry to the programme then the education provider needs to outline how at the end of the programme, all students have the necessary level of English for the standards of proficiency for their profession. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the English-language requirements of the programme to demonstrate that this standard is met.

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation and advertising material to clearly state that students may be required to undertake more than one criminal conviction check during the course of the programme and that the associated cost may be the responsibility of the student.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team and in reviewing the documentation the visitors noted that the education provider applies criminal conviction checks as part of the admission procedures. They also noted that it states that that associated cost of these checks may be the responsibility of the student. Through discussion however it was clarified that the placement model prescribed by the education provider will require students to undertake two different placements in two different practice placement settings and therefore may require the completion of two separate criminal conviction checks. The visitors therefore require evidence that students are made aware that additional criminal convictions checks may be required to complete the practice placements. This education provider should also clearly communicate that the costs of these additional checks may be the responsibility of the student.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that any student gaining credit through the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning mechanism is able to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for arts therapists.

Reason: In discussions with students studying on the Postgraduate Certificate in Therapeutic Application of Art the visitors were informed that a number of the students were hoping to be transferred onto the MA Art Therapy course. The students expected to continue studying on a part time basis and that their understanding was that they would only need to complete two years to gain the MA. From the documentation the visitors noted that the MA Art Therapy is a three

year part time programme. The visitors raised concerns that any transfer of this kind may mean that students exiting the MA Art Therapy may not be able to meet all of the relevant SOPs. Therefore the visitors require clarification and reassurance that any transfer onto an approved programme would go through the university accreditation of prior (experiential) learning process and that the approved admissions criteria for MA Art Therapy course would be applied to all students. This would ensure that all students successfully completing the MA in Art Therapy could meet the relevant SOPs and that this standard could be met.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that a system is in place for gaining students informed consent before they participate as service users in practical teaching.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not find evidence of a formal consent procedure in place to mitigate any risk involved in students participating as service users in practical teaching. If no formal policy for obtaining consent is in place students may feel they are treated differently in different situations and lodge academic appeals because of this. This in turn could lead to students completing the course unable to meet all of the relevant SOPs. The visitors therefore require evidence to show there is a formal consent policy in place, how the education provider will apply this policy and how students are informed about this policy and their right to confidentiality.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate within the programme documentation the areas of the programme where attendance is mandatory and highlight the consequences of missing any compulsory element.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors could find no evidence outlining which elements of the programme are mandatory. The visitors would expect that the core elements of the programme that are closely linked to the standards of proficiency to be compulsory, in particular the experiential groups, supervision groups and the placement elements of the programme. The visitors require the education provider to outline which elements of the programme are mandatory and demonstrate that this information is clearly articulated to students in order to make sure that students meet the standards of proficiency, and are able to practice safely and effectively. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is met.

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 revisit the standards of proficiency mapping document to clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes align to the standards of proficiency.

Reason: From a review of the standards of proficiency mapping document the visitors were unable to see where the learning outcomes align to the standards of proficiency as they did not have access to the completed module handbooks for all the masters' level modules. Therefore the visitors could not determine how the learning outcomes show that students who successfully complete the programme can meet all of the relevant SOPs. The visitors therefore require completed module handbooks for all modules to allow them to map the learning outcomes to the standards. The visitors also require the mapping document to be amended to clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes align to the standards of proficiency.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that the curriculum and associated reading lists reflect the philosophy of object relations theory.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and from discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that object relations theory is stated by the education provider as the key philosophy which underpins the course. However the visitors could not determine where this philosophy is intrinsically linked to the teaching and learning delivered. The visitors require evidence to show where this philosophy is built into the programme and evidence of full reading lists to demonstrate that this standard is met.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Condition: The education provider must articulate how the profession-specific-skills are adequately addressed within the interprofessional research module.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the students undertake an interprofessional research module. The visitors were unable to clarify from the documentation the details of this module and therefore unable to determine if the shared research module equips students with the profession-specific-research-skills required to meet the standards of proficiency. The visitors require the education provider to highlight the profession-specific-skills within this module to ensure that this standard is met.

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and clearly outline how practice placements are integral to the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and in discussions with the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors noted that there was not enough evidence that the education provider was responsible for managing placements in the programme. The visitors require further evidence to show the ongoing partnership arrangements with practice placements and demonstrate formal arrangements with practice placement providers. This is to ensure that the practice placements are and will remain integral to the programme and that the programme can meet this standard.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to show how they expect students to progress in terms of their practical skills during the placement module, ensuring fitness to practice.

Reason: From a review of the documentation the visitors noted that the education provider prescribes to a placement model of two placements. The expectations in terms of student progression and assessment however are outlined in terms of the placement module (which incorporates the two placement settings). The visitors noted that students are not assessed until the end of the module and therefore the end of the second placement. The visitors were concerned that each placement would not be assessed independently and that students would not be informed of any issues in terms of progression of practical skills and fitness to practice. The visitors would like to see a 'map' of the placement module outlining details of assessment to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes throughout the two placements.

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and outline the process for approving and monitoring the placements. The education provider must also produce guidelines on their placement requirements articulating what they constitute as a safe and supportive placement environment.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors noted that an audit tool is in place to check the quality of practice placements. However the visitors could not find any guidance or detail about what sort of evidence the education might collect from placement providers to demonstrate that the placement setting provide a safe and supportive environment. The visitors require further evidence of the auditing process and the guidelines in place to ensure that the education provider can make a judgement on whether placements provide safe and supportive environments.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and produce clear policies and procedures to support the approval and monitoring of practice placements.

Reason: From the documents submitted and discussions with the programme team the visitors did not have enough evidence that the education provider has a thorough and effective system in place for the approval and monitoring of placements. If there is not a system in place for evaluating practice placements this could lead to students having very different placement experiences and feeling they have been unfairly treated. This could then lead to students lodging academic appeals and could lead to students completing the programme without meeting the required SOPs associated with practice placements. The visitors need further detail of how the education provider makes a judgement on what constitutes an acceptable placement, and evidence of clear policies and procedures outlining how this judgement is made. This is to ensure that practice placements are as well managed as possible and that the programme can meet this standard.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide details of the practice placement educator training they offer to practice placement educators before they undertake any supervision of students on the programme.

Reason: From the documentation submitted, discussions with the programme team and placement providers the visitors were unclear as to the arrangements that are in place to prepare practice placement educators to supervise students on the programme. If there is not a system in place for ensuring that supervisors have had some form of supervision training students may have very different placement experiences and feel they have been unfairly treated. This could then lead to students lodging academic appeals and could lead to students completing the programme without meeting the required SOPs associated with practice placements. Therefore visitors require details of the practice placement educator training and evidence of the mechanism the education provider uses to record and monitor when a practice placement educator has undertaken initial training, refresher training or enhancement activity. The visitors require evidence that mechanisms are in place to ensure that all new practice placement educators receive appropriate training.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate the monitoring mechanism used to ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered.

Reason: From the documents submitted and discussions with the programme team the visitors could find no evidence that the education provider has mechanisms in place to demonstrate that all practice placement educators are appropriately registered. The visitors require clarification on how the education provider records and monitors the registration status of its practice placement

educators. The visitors also require clarification of the process and procedures in place if the education provider chooses to utilise practice placement educators who are not registered with the HPC. The visitors would require details on the mechanism in place to collect information about their experience, qualifications and training relevant to the practice placement. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- expectations of professional conduct;**
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate how practice placement providers and practice placement educators are fully prepared for placements in the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided the visitors noted that the learning outcomes were not clearly communicated in the practice placement handbook. Because of this it was also unclear as to how the learning outcomes for placements link to the standards of proficiency. The visitors also noted that the lines of communication and responsibility between the education provider, the students and the practice placement were not always clear. It is also unclear what the timing and duration of any placement experience would be and what associated records of achievement needed to be made. The visitors therefore require clarification of the assessment procedures how the learning outcomes link to relevant SOPs and how progression on placement is recorded. This should also include the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress. To ensure that all parties involved in practice placements are fully prepared this information should be clearly communicated in the programme documentation. This is to ensure that this standard can be met.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate the system in place to ensure that when students are in practice placement settings service users are aware that they are in training.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors could not see where a robust system is to be put in place to ensure that service users are aware that the people dealing with them are students in training. To ensure that the learning and teaching methods employed by the programme team respect the rights and needs of service users the visitors therefore require evidence that a system such as this will be put in place.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of a process by which students will obtain prior informed consent from service users in respect to the use of information obtained from placements for placement reports and dissertations etc.

Reason: From a review of the documentation the visitors did not note any evidence to suggest that a system is in place to ensure that students obtain prior informed consent from service users in respect to the use of information obtained from placements for placement reports and dissertations etc. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

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 revisit the Practice Placement Handbook to ensure that the assessment tool includes all the standards of proficiency.

Reason: From a review of the Practice Placement Handbook the visitors noted that the assessment tool did not include all the standards of proficiency. If some of the relevant SOPs are missing from the assessment of practice placements then students may complete the programme without being able to meet the SOPs. Therefore the visitors require this document to be amended to include all the standards of proficiency so that the students are assessed to ensure they can meet all the relevant SOPs.

Janek Dubowski
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