

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	University of Chester
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Nutrition and Dietetics
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of HPC Register</b>	Dietitian
<b>Date of visit</b>	29 – 30 November 2011

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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 'Dietitian' 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 29 March 2012. At the Committee meeting on 29 March 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 issues raised by the previous year's annual monitoring process. The issues raised by annual monitoring affected the following standards - programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements 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 an HPC 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 HPC visitors and profession	Susan Lennie (Dietitian) Alison Nicholls (Dietitian)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	22 per cohort once a year
First approved intake	September 2005
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Garfield Southall (University of Chester)
Secretary	Sue Sutton (University of Chester)
Members of the Joint Panel	Stephen Hughes (Internal Panel Member)

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overview of quality monitoring and enhancement of dietetics programmes and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme quality monitoring – responses to external examiners reports and annual monitoring reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student experience visits: a guide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality and diversity policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint programme team minutes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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"/>

## 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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 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 have also made a number of 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 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 programme team must revise the advertising materials for the programme to clearly articulate information about the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APL / AP(E)L) policies for the programme.

**Reason:** Documentation provided prior to the visit included information about the APL / AP(E)L policies for the programme. However, the visitors noted that the advertising materials did not include this information. Discussion with the programme team confirmed they did not include this information in advertising materials because if applicants used the APL / AP(E)L policies they would not be eligible for all, or some, of the NHS bursary and so be financially disadvantaged. The programme team stated that if anyone enquired about APL / AP(E)L they would be given the information. The visitors noted this reasoning, however considered information about APL / AP(E)L should be communicated clearly for all potential applicants in order for them to be able to make an informed decision about taking up or applying for a place on the programme.

The visitors therefore require the advertising materials (including the website, leaflets, prospectus) to be revised to include information about APL / AP(E)L and the financial impacts, to ensure applicants have all the information they need to make an informed choice on whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

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

**Condition:** The programme team must implement formal protocols to obtain informed consent when students participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users, in practical and clinical teaching.

**Reason:** The visitors noted through discussion with the students and the programme team there were no formal protocols for obtaining informed consent to participate as a service user in practical and clinical teaching. During discussion with the students it was clear informed consent was not obtained although the students felt they could opt-out from participating with no impact on their learning. Discussion with the programme team indicated they had no policies currently but did have a draft policy for the Human Nutrition module (XN5122). The visitors noted the programme uses a range of teaching methods including role plays, practising techniques with equipment for the profession and sharing personal information throughout the programme. The visitors were concerned that without consent protocols in place there would be nothing to mitigate any risk involved in trainees participating as service users. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about participating within the programme, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained

or how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning.

The visitors therefore require the programme team to implement formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students (such as a consent form to be signed prior to commencing the programme or annually) and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

## Recommendations

### **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.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team review the advertising materials for the programme to ensure they provide potential applicants with as much relevant information as possible.

**Reason:** The documentation provided prior to the visit included the advertising materials. The visitors were satisfied that upon meeting the condition for SET 2.1 in this report, essential information will be available for potential applicants. However, there were some areas the visitors wish to suggest the programme team review, in order that the advertising materials provide potential applicants with as much relevant information as possible.

The visitors noted the advertising materials stated prospective candidates must demonstrate a sensible approach to eating and display a healthy interest in food. The visitors felt this statement may convey the incorrect message to applicants that persons may not be eligible for the programme if they have any kind of eating disorder. The visitors recommend the programme team remove this statement from the advertising materials for increased clarity.

The visitors additionally noted that the advertising materials referred to the Health Circular HC (88/9) and Home Office Circular No. 8/88. The visitors felt this wording could cause confusion for potential applicants to the programme when a statement informing them about an enhanced CRB check would be clearer. The visitors recommend the programme team amend this information in the advertising materials.

The visitors were also given information that is handed out at open days for the programme. The visitors felt this was valuable information about the admissions process and the programme and recommend the programme team make this information available to potential applicants by putting it online alongside the programme details.

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

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team explore what can be done to manage the financial disadvantage associated with students who use the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APL / AP(E)L) policies.

**Reason:** During discussion the visitors heard that students on the programme using AP(E)L / APL policies could be financially disadvantaged by not being eligible for all, or some, of the NHS bursary students on this programme receive. The visitors are not aware of this being an issue for other dietetics programmes in the UK. The visitors recommend the programme team explore if there are



options that can be taken so students will not be disadvantaged in this way. The visitors suggest the programme team look to other allied health professional programmes within their own institution and then to other education provider dietetic programmes to find out how the programmes compare with managing this issue.

**3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team consider how they can use the planned Food Innovation building for this programme along with the postgraduate programme.

**Reason:** At the visit the visitors heard that the education provider had been approved for funding for the development of a new Food Innovation Building. The visitors heard that the building was to be used mainly with the postgraduate programmes. The visitors wanted to express their support for this new development and to encourage the programme team to look at how they can use the new building within the undergraduate provision too.

**3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team continue to monitor the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) system to ensure it is effective.

**Reason:** Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated there had been some problems with the PAT system. At the visit the programme team indicated a new system had been implemented for PAT this academic year. The new system involved one person from the programme team being allocated as the personal academic tutor for that year group for one academic year. The following academic year the group transfers to a new tutor. The visitors were aware the system was implemented to address issues of staff availability however feel this system potentially could have its own issues. The visitors felt the transfer between tutors could lead to problems with continuity of pastoral and academic support for students, particularly if a student has a specific issue the tutor is working with. Additionally they were aware that this would lead to an increase in workload for the person who is the tutor for the year. The visitors were aware the programme team has recently implemented this change and suggest they continue to monitor it closely to ensure they are aware of any problems and can appropriately respond to anything that arises from it.

**3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team consider how they communicate and signpost their professional suitability procedure.

**Reason:** Documentation and discussion with the programme team indicated the programme has a professional suitability procedure for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct. In discussion with the students and the practice placement providers it was clear they were uncertain of the details of this process, how the process could impact on completion of the programme or where to find information about it. Therefore the visitors recommend the programme team considers ways to communicate further and signpost information on the professional suitability procedure to students.

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

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team monitor the online interprofessional learning activities that are linked to the Professional Perspectives module to ensure the dietetics profession is adequately addressed.

**Reason:** Through documentation and discussion at the visit, the visitors heard about the cross-faculty interprofessional learning the students on this programme are part of. Discussion with the students indicated the format of the interprofessional learning could be better used. The students indicated there should be a member of the programme team monitoring the discussion boards to ensure the profession was being adequately represented however they were uncertain as to whether or not this happened in practice. In light of the students' comments, the visitors recommend the programme team ensure they monitor the interprofessional learning to ensure the profession specific aspects are appropriately included and the interprofessional learning is effective in its purpose.

Susan Lennie  
Alison Nicholls