hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Derby
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	1 – 2 April 2009

Contents

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 13 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Occupational 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 29 July 2009. At the Committee meeting on 29 July 2009, 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 standards, curriculum standards and practice placements standards. 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 following programmes – MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration) and BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography. 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. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. 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	Wendy Fraser (Occupational Therapist) Jane Grant (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Brendon Edmonds
HPC observer	Neil Strevett
Proposed student numbers	73 Full time 14 Part time
Initial approval	2 October 1995
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2009
Chair	Colin Fryer (University of Derby)
Secretary	Shelley Nix (University of Derby) Lesley Sawley (University of Derby)
Members of the joint panel	Christine Jones (Internal Panel Member) Ann Minton (Internal Panel Member) Doug Carr (Internal Panel Member) Gail Boniface (College of Occupational Therapists) Catherine Wells (College of Occupational Therapists)

	Clair Parkin (College of Occupational Therapists)

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	☒	☐	☐

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 60 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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.

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 admission procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all the programme documentation to ensure that the terminology in use is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, eligibility to apply for HPC registration is not conditional upon the completion of a pre-determined amount of practice placement hours. Rather eligibility to apply to the register is determined by the completion of the appropriate award for the profession. In the submitted documentation, there were instances of incorrect terminology with reference to the HPC. The documentation referred to the HPC as a 'professional body' providing 'professional body' registration. The HPC is a 'regulatory body', which provides registration complicit with statutory legislation. The visitors considered the terminology could be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require the documentation (including website information) to be thoroughly reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further documentation that articulates clearly the system used for the approval and monitoring of placements.

Reason: The submitted programme documentation did not sufficiently detail the processes that the education provider uses to approve and monitor practice placements. In discussion with the programme team and with the practice placement educators, it became apparent that relevant systems were in place that aim to assure the quality and parity of the placement experience. However, the visitors require further documentary evidence to be satisfied that the systems in place are formalised and are indeed providing a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the HPC Register.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail regarding the policy for aegrotat awards for the programme.

The visitors need to see evidence that this policy is clearly communicated within the documentation to ensure that this standard is being met.

Recommendations

3.11   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 should consider revising the attendance policy to clearly articulate the requirements and expectations placed upon students.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider clearly articulated that students were required to maintain a minimum of 80% attendance on all modules as per University policy. However, in discussions with the programme team, it became apparent that students were expected to maintain an attendance of 100% for all modules for this programme. The visitors felt that this disparity could potentially cause confusion for students. The visitors recommend that the programme documentation be updated to clearly articulate the expectations of the programme team and how these differ from the attendance standards set by the University.

5.5   The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider should consider carefully monitoring the range of placements to continue to further ensure they are appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Reason: In discussions with the senior team, programme team and practice placement educators, the visitors noted that the programme was committed to developing practice placements that reflect the 'emerging roles' for occupational therapists. The visitors also noted that the students only undertake 3 placements throughout the programme. With this in mind, the visitors recommend that the 'emerging roles' placements within this programme are carefully monitored. This is to continue to ensure that they are able to provide a placement experience that is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

5.7.5   Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The education provider should consider monitoring and further enhancing their communication links to the practice placement educators.

Reason: In discussions with the practice placement educators, it became apparent that they often experienced difficulty communicating with the programme team whilst students were on placement. The visitors recommend that this issue is monitored and appropriate systems of communication are further developed and documented to ensure that practice placement educators have a clear understanding of the most appropriate way to make contact with the programme team whilst a student is on placement.

5.13   The placement providers must have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to students, together with an indication of how this will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider should consider enhancing the audit of placements to continue to ensure that equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policies are being implemented and monitored.

Reason: The practice placements educators confirmed that equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory policies of the relevant trusts were included as part of the induction process for students on placement. The visitors noted that audits were carried out during and at the conclusion of every placement, although it was not clear as to whether these policies and their implementation were specifically addressed. The visitors recommend that the implementation and monitoring of these policies is explicitly included in any practice placements audits that are conducted. This is to continue to ensure that students are aware of these policies and the procedure to undertake to access them, and that appropriate actions have been taken in instances where an issue of this nature has arisen.

Wendy Fraser
Jane Grant