

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Essex
Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)
Mode of delivery	Full time accelerated
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	19 – 20 January 2016

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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 'occupational therapist' 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 20 May 2016. At the Committee meeting, 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 - the programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. 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 and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes; BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy - Part time, BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy - Full time and Post Graduate Diploma in Occupational Therapy – Full time accelerated. The education provider, the professional bodies and the HCPC 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 HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the professional body outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Dawn Fraser (Occupational therapist) Joanna Goodwin (Occupational therapist) Manoj Mistry (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officers (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	45 per cohort, one cohort per year (Including the Post Graduate Diploma in Occupational Therapy)
First approved intake	September 2010
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2016
Chair	David Penman (University of Essex)
Secretary	Kirsty Sceats (University of Essex)
Members of the joint panel	Rebecca Khanna (College of Occupational Therapists) Joan Healey (College of Occupational Therapists) Clair Parkin (College of Occupational Therapists) Alex Whithair (Student panel member) Nicky Slee (Internal panel member) Lesley Wilson (External panel member)

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 condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 57 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining SET.

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 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 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

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 revisit the programme documentation to ensure accurate and consistent information is provided regarding placement hours.

Reason: Within the programme documentation the visitors noted inconsistencies in the required placement hours stated. For example within the Practice Placement Handbook:

- page 11 states “The programme enables students to undertake a minimum of 1056 hours in practice...”;
- page 15 states “Students on the programme will undertake a minimum of 1000 hours in practice...”, and;
- page 38 states an outlined placement week of 37.5 hours across 28 weeks which totals 1050 hours

Also, the visitors noted that the placement hours as stated within each placement module have a combined total of 1073 hours + preparation for placement hours. In addition to this the visitors noted that the placement structure did not take into account any bank holidays throughout the year. The visitors note that bank holidays will impact on the number of hours that will be achievable in the stated timeframes. Without clarity of the required and available placement hours for the programme and a clear timeline of where placement hours are to be achieved, the visitors are unable to make a judgement on the duration of practice placements for this programme. The visitors therefore require documentation which clearly defines the required and available placement hours for the programme and that they are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the current level of service user and carer involvement for the programme.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions with the programme team and service user group, it was clear that there is currently a level of service user and carer involvement in the programme and appropriate support is in place for these members. The visitors were therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted that the level of involvement is minimal from service users and carers and this is currently on an ad hoc basis. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that service users and carers are involved and supported they considered that the current structure poses a risk to continued involvement for the programme. Specifically, the visitors noted that there is no formalised training identified for training service users and carers. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team considers reviewing the current level of service user and carer involvement for 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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revisiting the module descriptors to provide more clarity on the specific standards of proficiency (SOPs) being delivered within each module.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions with the programme team it was clear that the SOPs are being delivered within the current modules. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted that the majority of module descriptors for the programme refer to the overarching SOPs as opposed to individual SOPs. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that the individual SOPs were being delivered from reviewing the SOPs mapping document, they considered the lack of detail within the module descriptors could pose a risk to future delivery of the modules. Specifically, the visitors noted that having this detail might better support any future changes to the programme including module updates and changes to programme staff. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team revisit the module descriptors to provide more clarity on the specific SOPs to be delivered within each module.

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

Recommendation: The programme team should consider strengthening the monitoring of attendance for practice placement educators when delivering new and refresher training.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions with the programme team and the practice placement providers, it was clear that the education provider runs regular training sessions for practice placement educators as well as ensuring a currency in their knowledge. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted that the monitoring of attendance of practice placement educators is

currently minimal. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that practice educators are attending appropriate training, they considered the level of monitoring of training could pose a risk to the future attendance of practice educators at required training sessions. Specifically the visitors noted that the programme team could better evaluate where any additional training may be delivered to those who could not attend. Therefore, the visitors recommend that the programme team revisits the current process for monitoring the attendance of practice placement educators when delivering new and refresher training.

Dawn Fraser
Joanna Goodwin
Manoj Mistry