hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Essex
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Physiotherapist
Date of visit	23-24 March 2010

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 14 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Physiotherapist' or 'Physical 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 8 June 2010. At the Committee meeting on 7 July 2010, 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 admissions, programme management and resources. 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 reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy (Full and Part time), MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration) (Full time) and Post Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy (pre-registration) (Full time). The education provider, the professional bodies 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 bodies; outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Nicki Smith (Physiotherapy) Anthony Power (Physiotherapy)
HPC executive officer	Ben Potter
HPC observer	Tracey Samuel-Smith
Proposed student numbers	15
Initial approval	July 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Nigel South (University of Essex)
Secretary	Kirstie Sceats (University of Essex)
Members of the joint panel	Nina Thompson (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists) Sara Eastburn (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and External Panel Member) Mike Wilson (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	☒	☐	☐
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 52 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 5 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 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.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

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 revise the programme documentation to identify the mandatory attendance requirements and the associated attendance policy for the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit had only one section regarding attendance for the students. The section stated "students must attend all elements of university and practice modules" and identified that attendance would be monitored, recorded and the professional suitability process would deal with poor attendance (validation document p28). There was no further mention of attendance in the documentation. In discussion with the students and the programme team the visitors noted that there was an informal mandatory attendance level of 80%. However the visitors were unable to identify any courses of action that would take place prior to the instigation of the professional suitability process if this level was not. The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation to identify any mandatory attendance requirements and the associated attendance policy 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.

Condition: The education provider must revise programme documentation to make explicit where and when within the programme students can expect to receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussions with students, practice placement educators and the programme team that while CPR training was now provided at the education provider the prior provision of this training had been irregular. The visitors felt that due to this there is the potential for gaps in the knowledge of the students graduating from the programme which could prevent students meeting the Standards of Proficiency (SoP) for physiotherapists in particular SoP 3a.1 (p.12 of the Standards of Proficiency for physiotherapists). The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation to identify when and where students can expect CPR training as part of the programme to avoid potential gaps in knowledge arising in the future.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of planning to continue to provide and encourage practice placement educators to undertake adequate training.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussions with the students, practice placement providers, senior team that there were some practice placement educators who had not undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training. They also

acknowledged the difficulties in getting practice placement educators to attend training. In discussions with the programme team the efforts undertaken to train practice placement educators and the belief that at least 80% of practice placement educators had been appropriately trained were also noted. However the visitors felt that the efforts to train practice placement educators should be maintained to ensure that students continue to achieve their learning outcomes from practice placements. The visitors therefore require documentation to detail how the education provider will continue to meet this SET in particular plans around future provision of training and any possible developments for the future such as online training.

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 revise programme documentation to make explicit what assessment students will expect to be subject to when completing CPR training.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussions with students, practice placement educators and the programme team that while CPR training was now provided at the education provider the prior provision of this training had been irregular which has affected SET 4.1 and SoP 3a.1 as outlined above. While there is now a regular provision of CPR training at the education provider the visitors were unable to identify any assessment methodology to ensure students had passed the training satisfactorily. The visitors therefore require the assessment procedure for CPR training to be clearly articulated within the programme documentation to identify how students can expect CPR training to be assessed to avoid potential gaps in knowledge arising in the future which could affect their ability to meet the relevant SoP.

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 revise the programme documentation to clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register or to propose alternative arrangements with the HPC.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the documentation provided there was insufficient detail regarding the appointment requirements for external examiners. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider wide assessment regulations. However they require evidence that the HPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiners for the programme have been included in the programme documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider embedding reflective practice across all years of the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation, specifically in the validation document (p12 and 21), the module checklist (module HS367) and in discussions with the programme team that reflective practice is supported and developed within the programme. The visitors are therefore satisfied that this SET continues to be met. However they suggest that to reinforce the practice of reflective thinking it could be introduced in earlier modules and embedded throughout the rest of the programme.

Nicky Smith
Anthony Power