hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Leicester
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	12 -13 January 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 'Practitioner psychologist' or 'Clinical psychologist' 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 12 May 2011. At the Committee meeting on 12 May 2011, 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 as the practitioner psychology profession came onto the register in July 2009 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. 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 part of a joint event. The professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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 the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Harry Brick (Clinical psychologist) Stephen Davies (Clinical psychologist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	15 per cohort
Initial approval	January 1995
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	3 October 2011
Chair	Nigel Siesage (University of Leicester)
Secretary	Pamela Sawyer (University of Leicester)
Members of the joint panel	Nancy Pistrang (British Psychological Society) Andrew Cuthbertson (British Psychological Society) Andrew Vidgen (British Psychological Society) Lucy Kerry (British Psychological Society) Robert Knight (British Psychological Society)

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	☐	☒	☐
Supplementary evidence document produced for visit	☒	☐	☐

Prior to the visit the HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years as the education provider submitted an external examiners' report for the academic year of 2008-2009. The education provider provided external examiners' reports for 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 at the visit itself.

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 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.

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 programme documentation and advertising materials for the programme to include information about accreditation for prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) policies for the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included documents which would be available for the trainees of the programme and a supplementary evidence document which was created solely for the purpose of the visit. The detail about the use of the AP(E)L policies was described only in the supplementary evidence document and therefore was not available for the potential applicants or trainees on the programme. Discussions at the visit confirmed that the programme does not, and does not plan to, use AP(E)L policies for entry to the programme. The visitors were satisfied that the programme does not use AP(E)L policies the programme but were aware that this information should be communicated clearly for all potential applicants and trainees on the programme. The visitors therefore require the advertising materials (such as the website) and programme documentation (such as the student handbook) to be revised to include this information to ensure that applicants and trainees 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.

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 programme documentation to clearly articulate the procedures for lines of responsibility for all persons involved in the placement experience for the trainees on this programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included placement information which outlined the roles and responsibilities of the clinical supervisors at placement when the clinical supervisor was registered with the HPC. It was unclear as to who took responsibility for the trainee at placement when this clinical supervisor was not registered with the HPC.

Discussions at the visit clarified that in these instances an HPC registered 'Coordinating supervisor' would be present and they would have overall

responsibility for the trainee. The clinical supervisor directly working with the trainee would be known as the 'Associate coordinator' and the coordinating supervisor and associate coordinator would work together to ensure the trainee is managing the placement appropriately.

The visitors were satisfied with the arrangements for a coordinating supervisor who would be HPC registered to be present and accountable for all trainees however require information about these arrangements to be clearly articulated for trainees in the programme documentation (such as the placement handbook). The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation that clearly articulates the procedures for lines of responsibility for all persons involved in the placement experience for the trainees on this programme.

Recommendations

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should monitor how the programme team continue to cover the roles and responsibilities of the vacant position while there is an empty post in the programme team.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation there is a vacant position on the team which is yet to be filled. The visitors were satisfied there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme. However, the visitors recommend the programme team monitor the covering of the roles and responsibilities of the vacant position to ensure there is no adverse effect to the delivery of the programme while a new member of staff is sourced.

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Recommendation: The visitors wish to recommend that the education provider considers further communication and signposting of information on the student complaints process for trainees.

Reason: From the documentation provided and discussions at the visit it was clear that there was a student complaints process. At the visit the programme team explained that this information was conveyed to the students at induction and through the student handbook. Discussions with the students indicated they were not fully aware of the process or where to access this information although they felt confident they could find the information if they looked for it. The visitors therefore wish to recommend that the education provider considers further communication and signposting of information on the student complaints process throughout the duration of the programme alongside the initial information given at induction.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Recommendation: The education provider should monitor how information regarding the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics is disseminated.

Reason: The documentation provided and discussions at the visit indicated the programme team were fully aware of the need to ensure the trainees were aware of the HPC and the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors were satisfied with the level of communication that currently takes place but are aware the profession is ever-changing and that as a result the programme will always be developing and changing also. The visitors wish to highlight to the programme team that they should always be looking at how they communicate information regarding the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics to ensure trainees are fully aware of the implications of the HPC and the HPC standards of conduct performance and ethics.

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.**

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to look at how they develop working relationships with newly recruited placement providers.

Reason: The education provider has recently entered into an agreement with new placement providers to provide additional placements for their trainees. Discussions at the visit indicated the placements with which long standing working relationships existed, were fully prepared for working with trainees from this programme and were fully engaged with the development and collaboration of the programme. The newer placement providers however, did not feel as connected and engaged in the programme. There were some issues highlighted regarding information about meetings and trainee contracts which was not being disseminated as thoroughly as it could have been. The visitors were aware that at the time of the visit the new placement providers had been working with the programme for only 3 months and so some 'teething problems' were to be expected. The visitors also wanted to highlight that because the placements are new to the programme they may need extra support and help until they are fully aware of all the intricacies of the programme and more confident with knowing the workings of the programme. The visitors wish to recommend that the programme team look at how they communicate with the new placement providers to ensure the appropriate support is given and the placement is able to communicate problems to the education provider which are then acted upon.

Harry Brick
Stephen Davies