

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Liverpool
Validating body / Awarding body	N/A
Programme name	Pg Dip Radiotherapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Radiographer
Date of visit	28 – 29 October 2009

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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 14 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Radiographer' 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 25 November 2009. At the Committee meeting on 25 November 2009, the programme was approved. 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. 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 education provider reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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. 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	Russell Hart (Radiographer) Helen Best (Radiographer)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Neil Strevett
HPC observer	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	10
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2010
Chair	Julie Walton (University of Liverpool)
Secretary	Ann Nibbs (University of Liverpool)
Members of the joint panel	Noreen Sinclair (External Panel Member) Spencer Goodman (External Panel Member) Kathy Johnson (University of Liverpool) Stuart Marshall-Clarke (University of Liverpool) Lynne Crook (University of Liverpool)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review the External examiners reports from the last two years prior to the visit as the programme is new and there were no reports to review.

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"/>

The HPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy programme, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 59 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 8 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for 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 2 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 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 all the programme documentation and advertising materials for the programme and update it to clarify both the title of the programme and any references to the protected title of 'Radiographer', and ensure that the use of the protected title is consistent throughout the documentation.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider made reference to a number of practitioner titles throughout and was not consistent in referring to the protected title. Therefore the visitors requested that the education provider revise the programme documentation and all advertising materials to ensure that applicants and students had the information they needed to make an informed choice on whether to accept an offer of a place on the programme.

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to ensure that the procedures relating to selection and entry criteria, particularly the process enacted for checking applicants for criminal convictions, is clearly stated.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that the education provider had in place clear admissions procedures and entry criteria in relation to the programme, including a clear process for checking applicants for previous criminal convictions. However, the processes as detailed within the documentation were judged by the visitors not to accurately represent the procedures as described, and were thus judged to be potentially confusing. The visitors therefore required the education provider to revise their documentation to accurately reflect the processes as described by the programme team during the visit.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide documentary evidence to show how the resources at practice placements will effectively support student learning.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were confident that the resources were in place to support student learning in all settings, including the practice placements that students would undertake. However, the visitors judged that this was not evident from the documentation the education provider had submitted. Therefore, the visitors requested documentary evidence to show how this standard would be met, particularly in relation to practice placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide documentary evidence to show how they effectively approve and monitor all practice placements.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors judged that it was not clear how the education provider effectively approves and monitors all radiotherapy practice placements. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that education provider does have effective systems in place to approve and monitor placements. Therefore, the visitors requested that the education provider provides documentary evidence to show how this standard will be met.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must provide documentary evidence to show that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at all radiotherapy placements.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors judged that it was not clear how the education provider ensured that there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at all radiotherapy placements. Curriculum Vitae had been supplied for each of the clinical tutors at each practice placement. However, the visitors could not judge how the education provider met this standard in relation to other staff involved in the delivery of this programme at the placements, particularly the clinical assessors. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that education provider had in place adequate systems to ensure that there would be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at each practice placement. Therefore, the visitors requested that the education provider provides documentary evidence to show how this standard will be met.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide documentary evidence to show that all practice placement educators have undertaken appropriate training.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors judged that it was not clear how the education provider ensured that staff involved in the delivery of the programme at all practice placements had undertaken appropriate training. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that education provider had in place adequate systems to ensure that staff at practice placements were appropriately trained and would undertake refresher training as appropriate. Therefore, the visitors requested that the education provider provides documentary evidence to show how this standard will be met.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must revisit a number of module descriptors and the programme specifications to ensure that the learning outcomes on the modules match the assessment methods.

Reason: The education provider had submitted as part of the programme documentation a number of module descriptors that dealt with the application of radiotherapy theory into practice. The visitors judged that a number of the module descriptors detailed assessment methods which would assess the application of theory in clinical practice but this was not detailed in the learning outcomes for the modules. Therefore the visitors requested that the education provider revise the following module descriptors to ensure that a learning outcome in relation to the application of theory to clinical practice is added to the existing module learning outcomes: Clinical Radiotherapy: theory to practice, RADT 701, 702 and 705; Integrated Professional Practice Studies module, RADT 707.

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 revisit the course documentation and clarify either that at least one of the external examiners appointed to the programme are HPC registered, or if external examiners are yet to be appointed to the programme, to include a statement on how this standard will be met.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors judged that it was not clear whether external examiners had been appointed to the programme and, if so, whether this standard had been met. The documentation submitted also made no reference as to how the appointment of external examiners would contain at least one external examiner who was HPC registered, or what other arrangements would be agreed. Therefore, the visitors requested that the education provider submit revised documentation to show how this standard would be met.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how to gain students' consent to participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching sessions in a more informed way.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider contained an appropriate consent form which students' were required to sign prior to participation in a practical clinical simulation sessions. From discussions with the students on the existing BSc Radiotherapy programme and subsequently with the programme team, it emerged that students signed the consent form at the start of their studies, as part of the general induction programme, but the students had little or no recollection of doing this or the implications. Though the actual number of practical sessions where students would be required to act as service users was small, the visitors recommend that the programme team should consider gaining students' consent at appropriate points during the programme where such teaching occurs.

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

Recommendation: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and all relevant student documentation and ensure that they are revised to contain reference to the most up to date HPC guidance, particularly the new guidance on conduct and ethics for students, and that students are made aware and referred to the new student area of the HPC website as appropriate.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team, the visitors were confident that the education provider had put in a place a process for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct and the programme would meet this standard. However, the documentation submitted by the education provider did not reference the latest HPC guidance and no provision had been made to direct students to the new student area of the HPC website. Therefore, the visitors requested that the programme documentation and all relevant student documentation be updated to reflect this.

Russell Hart
Helen Best