

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Manchester
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Hearing aid dispensers
Date of visit	21 – 22 March 2012

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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 'Hearing aid dispenser' 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 23 August 2012. At the Committee meeting on 23 August 2012, 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 an HPC only visit. The education provider and validating body did not validate or review the programmes at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Audiology, full time and MSc Audiology (with clinical competency certificate – CCC) (formerly known as MSc Audiology (with clinical competency certificate or certificate of audiological competence), full time. Separate reports exist for these programmes.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Bernadette Waters (Occupational therapist) Richard Sykes (Hearing aid dispenser) Hugh Crawford (Hearing aid dispenser)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	20
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2012
Chair	Anne Hesketh (University of Manchester)
Secretary	Ryan Hurst (University of Manchester)

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

The HPC did not review any external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner for the programme as it is new.

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) Audiology and MSc Audiology (with clinical competency certificate – CCC) 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 54 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 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 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.

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 of the programme documentation, and any advertising material, to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of HPC regulation.

Reason: The visitors noted that elements of the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, there were instances of incorrect or out-of-date terminology in reference to HPC 'accrediting' the programme. The HPC does not accredit education programmes we approve education programmes. The visitors also noted reference to 'state registration' throughout the documentation. The term 'state registered' is no longer used by the professions we regulate and should not be incorporated into any materials relating to an HPC approved programme. The documentation also, on occasion, stated that completion of the programme will enable graduates to register with the HPC. Upon successful completion of the programme all students become eligible to apply for registration with the HPC and as such the language the education provider uses needs to reflect this.

The visitors finally noted that the programme award title is BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology); however the education provider frequently referred to the programme as 'BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology)'. The visitors require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation to ensure that the award title is consistently referred to throughout the documentation. The visitors considered that the current terminology in place could be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require all programme documentation, including advertising materials, to be amended to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology to ensure consistency.

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 the programme documentation to clearly highlight that successful completion of the programme leads to eligibility to apply for registration as a hearing aid dispenser with the HPC. The education provider must also revisit the programme documentation to ensure that applicants and students are given further information about the option of becoming a hearing aid dispenser and what it entails. The education provider must finally clearly highlight the role of the HPC as the statutory regulator for hearing aid dispensers.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted limited reference to hearing aid dispensers and the fact that successful completion of the programme leads to eligibility to apply for registration as a

hearing aid dispenser with the HPC. The visitors were concerned that the role of a hearing aid dispenser was not clearly highlighted within the programme documentation and that potential applicants as well as students on the programme would be unaware of the options available to them. The visitors also noted little reference to the role of the HPC as the statutory regulator for hearing aid dispensers. The visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation in relation to information regarding the option of becoming a hearing aid dispenser to ensure that applicants have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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 programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that potential applicants are made aware of the funding arrangements for the programme and any likely additional costs associated with taking up a place on the programme.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that all pre-Registration Hearing aid dispenser programmes delivered by the education provider will now be funded by fee paying students. From a review of the programme documentation the visitors were unable to locate information relating to the funding of the programme. From discussions with students the visitors also noted that students may be expected to self-fund additional costs associated with taking up a place on the programme. Some students noted that they were required to stay in hospital accommodation when going on placement and that they self-funded the associated costs. Some students also stated that costs associated with accommodation and travel could be claimed back. The visitors were unable to locate information relating to additional costs or funding support within the programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure that the funding arrangements for the programme and any potential additional costs and funding support associated with the programme are clearly stated to demonstrate that this standard has been met.

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 the programme documentation to clearly highlight the range and length of practice placements in year one of the programme and further highlight that Audiology is the only neurosensory theme delivered by the education provider and the programme team will support students who wish to transfer to another theme on a case by case basis. .

Reason: In discussions with the programme team it was stated students will be required to undertake ten weeks of practice placement in year one of the programme (six weeks observing audiology settings and four weeks observing neurophysiology, ophthalmic and vision science settings). However from a review

of the programme documentation the visitors noted it states students are required to undertake six weeks of practice placement in year one of the programme and considered the information to be potentially misleading. The visitors also noted discussions with the programme team where it was stated that the education provider is in discussion with local higher education providers concerning potential partnerships that would allow students to transfer between Practitioner Training Programme (PTP), but at present any request would be considered on a case by case basis. The visitors considered this to be important information that an applicant would require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation, including advertising materials to further highlight that the University of Manchester only offers the Audiology neurosensory theme and that any request to transfer to another PTP themes will be supported and considered by the programme team on a case by case basis. The education provider must also clearly highlight the range and length of practice placements in year one of the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that a formal system is in place for gaining students informed consent before they participate as service users in practical teaching.

Reason: Through discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted that consent was obtained verbally from students when participating as service users in practical teaching. The visitors also noted that the education provider has plans to develop formal protocols to support the consent process. The visitors were not presented with clear protocols to demonstrate that a formal system is in place for gaining students informed consent before they participate as service users in practical teaching. The visitors therefore require the education provider to implement formal protocols for obtaining consent from students (such as a consent form to be signed prior to commencing the programme) and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching (such as alternative learning arrangements).

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that any exit awards from the programme do not provide eligibility to apply to the HPC Register.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation submitted by the education provider the visitors noted information relating to the programme exit awards that could be misleading to applicants and students. The visitors noted that within the programme documentation the education provider makes reference to “professional regulation” when discussing exit awards and does not

differentiate between the awards that lead to eligibility to Register as an audiologist and the award that leads to eligibility to apply to the HPC Register as a hearing aid dispenser. In the 'BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology) programme handbook' (page 10) it states "to obtain the clinical qualification in Healthcare Science (Audiology), and be eligible for registration, you must achieve the minimum number of academic and clinical credits as specified below" and goes on to list the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology) and BSc (Ord) Healthcare Science (Audiology). The visitors noted that statements relating to the award of an ordinary degree leading to professional registration to be potentially misleading and could lead to the assumption that these awards may allow students to apply to the HPC Register when they do not. Therefore, visitors need to see evidence that the documentation clearly articulates that any exit awards from this programme would not confer eligibility to apply to the HPC Register, to ensure that this standard can be met.

Recommendations

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 programme documentation to further highlight learning outcomes specific to the hearing aid dispenser part of the Register.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that the delivery of hearing aid specific content ensures that those who successfully complete the programme can meet the relevant standards of proficiency. The visitors noted that the 'Professional Studies' modules incorporate professional issues and topics associated with hearing aid dispensing. The visitors also noted that students receive lectures from hearing aid dispensers and that some students get the opportunity to undertake practice placements in non-NHS settings. The visitors were therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, from a review of the programme documentation the visitors highlighted that it was not always clear which learning outcomes are associated with which standard of proficiency. The visitors recommend that the education provider should consider revisiting the programme documentation to further emphasise the learning outcomes that are specific to hearing aid dispensing.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider further developing opportunities for interprofessional learning within the programme.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors noted examples of interprofessional learning within the programme with sessions being shared with speech and language therapy students. The visitors were satisfied that the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group was adequately addressed and therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors also noted that the education provider runs a range of health and social care programmes and recommend that the education provider should continue to develop further opportunities for interprofessional learning within the programme.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing its practice placement audit processes to ensure they are applicable to and include non-NHS placements.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied with the current system for approving and monitoring practice placements. The visitors noted that the education provider has a robust audit process in place for NHS placements.

Through discussions with the programme team the visitors noted future plans to expand the range of practice placements to include non-NHS placements. The visitors also noted the current arrangements in place where students can go to non-NHS settings for a period of ad hoc placement days to gain a greater insight into hearing aid dispensing and private practice. The visitors recommend that the education provider should consider reviewing its practice placement audit processes to ensure they are applicable to and include non-NHS placements. The visitors suggest that this may be an adapted approval and monitoring mechanism for short ad hoc placements but highlight the importance of having some quality safeguards in place at all times.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the mechanisms in place to monitor the attendance of practice placement educators at practice placement educator training and introduce a requirement for refresher training.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with practice placement educators the visitors noted that the education provider facilitates an annual 'Clinical Educator Training Day'. The visitors noted that all new practice placement educators must attend this training before they can supervise a student and that they are expected to attend subsequent practice placement educator training events. However, the visitors noted that refresher training is not mandatory and the education provider does not outline a minimum requirement for attendance at subsequent practice placement educator training events. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider should consider reviewing the mechanisms in place to monitor the attendance of practice placement educators at practice placement educator training and introduce a requirement for refresher training to ensure that all practice placement educators remain engaged with the programme and up to date.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider developing a system for checking the HPC registration details of practice placement educators in non-NHS practice placements.

Reason: Through discussions with the programme team the visitors noted future plans to expand the range of practice placements to include non-NHS placements. The visitors also noted the current arrangements in place where students can go to non-NHS settings for a period of ad hoc placement days to gain a greater insight into hearing aid dispensing and private practise. The visitors recommend that the education provider should consider developing a system for checking the HPC registration details of practice placement educators in non-NHS practice placements to ensure that this standard continues to be met if the programme increases its use of non-NHS placements.

Richard Sykes
Hugh Crawford