

## Visitors' report

|                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Name of education provider</b>    | University of Portsmouth      |
| <b>Programme name</b>                | BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science |
| <b>Mode of delivery</b>              | Full time                     |
| <b>Relevant part of HPC Register</b> | Biomedical scientist          |
| <b>Date of visit</b>                 | 13 – 14 December 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 'Biomedical scientist' 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 10 May 2012. At the Committee meeting on 10 May 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

This visit was the result of the education provider amending their currently approved BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes and reforming them into a new training route. Given the similarity between the approved programmes and the new programme, it was agreed the approval of this programme would incorporate those who enrolled for the September 2011 cohort. Those students will be eligible to apply for registration upon successful completion of the programme with the caveat that the education provider will have to meet all conditions in this report including any conditions the visitors set specifically for the first cohort of students who commenced the programme in September 2011.

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 visit also considered a BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on this programme only. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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 decision on the programmes' status.

## Visit details

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Name of HPC visitors and profession       | David Houliston (Biomedical scientist)<br>Peter Ruddy (Biomedical scientist)  |
| HPC executive officer (in attendance)     | Benjamin Potter   |
| Proposed student numbers                  | 20  |
| Proposed start date of programme approval | September 2011  |
| Chair                                     | Darren Mernagh (University of Portsmouth)   |
| Secretary                                 | Nicola Noyce (University of Portsmouth)   |
| Members of the joint panel                | Alan Wainwright (Institute of Biomedical Scientists)<br>Christine Murphy (Institute of Biomedical Scientists)<br>David Eccleston (Institute of Biomedical Scientists) |

## 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"/> |
| Supplementary Documentation  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit, there have been no past external examiners' reports as the programme 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<br>(eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## 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 50 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 7 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 did not make any 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

### **3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used**

**Condition:** The programme team must revise all programme documentation to ensure that references to students' potential employment are current and that they reflect the requirements for statutory regulation.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation and in discussions with the students that graduates for the programme are expected to graduate and work as healthcare science practitioners. In discussions with the programme team and the placement providers it was clear that this has been articulated to students in the expectation that this will be a professional role within the NHS by the time these students will graduate. However, the visitors noted that the students had a definite sense of the difference between the role of a healthcare science practitioner and a biomedical scientist and expressed their preference for aspects of the role of healthcare science practitioners. In particular they highlighted the aspect of being more involved in the patient journey; from giving a sample to potential diagnosis. The visitors considered that this could lead to students having unrealistic expectations of a professional role which has not currently been fully defined and utilised by NHS employers. The visitors also noted that students were aware of the requirements of registration with the HPC but were less clear over the use of the protected title biomedical scientist. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation to reflect the current situation in regards to potential employment and the requirements for statutory regulation. In this way the visitors can be sure that students are aware of their potential future employment situation and are aware of the requirements for professional regulation when they graduate.

### **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 programme team must provide further evidence of how the learning outcomes of the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme have been comprehensively included in this programme.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the documentation provided that there had been no change in the way students meet the standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists on this programme when compared to the previous BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes. This was articulated in the standards of education and training mapping provided by the programme team (p.236). However, the visitors were unclear as to how the programme team had achieved this with the changes made to fit the additional requirements of Medical Education England (MEE) and the changes required by the education provider. The visitors therefore need evidence to further clarify how the programme team have comprehensively included the learning outcomes from the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes into this programme. In this way the visitors can be sure that that the programme ensures that those students who successfully complete it meet the standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists and will be eligible to apply to the Register.

### **5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence about how the approval and monitoring of practice placements ensures that a safe and supportive environment is provided for students while they are on placement.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation, and in discussion with the programme team, that each placement setting utilised by the programme will have to satisfy the faculty placement office's (FPO) requirements before students can attend that placement. However, the visitors were unclear as to what the approval and monitoring processes involved and how they ensured that practice placement settings provided a safe and supportive environment. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the approval and monitoring processes employed by the FPO and more specifically how they ensure that practice placements provide a safe and supportive environment for students. In this way the visitors can be sure that this standard continues to be met.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the formal processes in place which ensure that practice placements are thoroughly and effectively approved and monitored.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation and in discussion with the programme team that the placements for the programme will have to satisfy the faculty placement office's (FPO) requirements before students can attend that placement setting. However, the visitors were unclear as to what the approval and monitoring processes involved and what specific requirements practice placement settings had to satisfy in order to be approved by the FPO. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the approval and monitoring processes employed by the FPO and more specifically what requirements placements had to meet in order to be approved. In this way the visitors can be sure that the programme's system of approving and monitoring practice placements is thorough and effective.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of how the practice placement educator training will prepare practice placement educators to supervise students from this programme.

**Reason:** In the documentation, provided prior to the visit, the visitors noted that the programme team offer annual 'train the trainer' training for practice placement educators. However, in discussions with the programme team and the practice placement providers it was clear that the current training was focused on the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes. Training regarding this programme had been provided but, due to time constraints, only to certain lead

members of placement staff had undertaken it. These members of staff were then disseminating this down to practice placement educators. However, the visitors were unclear as to how well prepared practice placement educator staff were to supervise students on this programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the training that will be undertaken by practice placement educators to ensure they understand the requirements for supervising students on this programme. In this way the visitors can be sure that placement educators have undertaken appropriate training and can fulfil the supervisory role required by this programme to ensure that students can meet the learning outcomes associated with their placement experience.

#### **5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the plans in place for future formal collaboration between practice placement educators and the programme team.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the documentation provided by the programme team at the visit, and in discussion with the practice placement providers, that there has been regular and effective collaboration between the placement providers and the programme team. This has been occurring through, but not limited to, the 'Biomedical Science Hospital Placement Working Group' while the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes have been running. However, the visitors were unclear as to how this provision would continue with the creation of the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science programme and the phasing out of the applied biomedical science programmes. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how this formal collaboration will continue in the future. In this way the visitors can be sure that there is regular and effective collaboration between the practice placement providers and the programme team and that this standard continues to be met.

#### **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 programme team must provide further evidence of how the assessment of the learning outcomes of the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme has been mirrored in the assessment strategy of this programme.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the documentation provided that there had been no change in the assessment strategy employed to ensure that students meet the standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists on this programme when compared to the previous BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes. This was articulated in the standards of education and training mapping provided by the programme team (p.243). However, the visitors were unclear as to how the programme team had achieved this with the changes made to fit the additional requirements of Medical Education England (MEE) and the changes required by the education provider. The visitors therefore need evidence to further clarify how the programme team have employed the same, or similar, assessment strategy from the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes in this programme. In this way the visitors can be sure that that the

programme ensures that those students who successfully complete it meet the standards of proficiency for biomedical scientists and will be eligible to apply to the Register.

Peter Rudy  
David Houliston