hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Southampton
Programme name	Health Psychology Research and Professional Practice (PhD)
Mode of delivery	Full time and part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Health psychologist
Date of visit	16 – 17 February 2011

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 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 'Health 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 25 August 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, however, the education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Gareth Roderique-Davies (Health Psychologist) Lynn Dunwoody (Health Psychologist)
HPC executive officers (in attendance)	Tracey Samuel-Smith
Proposed student numbers	Intake of 1 or 2 per year. 10 over the course of the programme
Initial approval	01/01/2007
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2011
Chair	Peter Smith (University of Southampton)
Secretary	Sean Withill (University of Southampton)
Members of the joint panel	Steve Tee (Internal Panel Member) Rachel Gillibrand (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 37 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 20 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 have also made a commendation. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

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

Condition: The education provider must redraft the admissions documentation, including the website information, to illustrate the admissions procedures for criminal conviction checks.

Reason: From discussions with trainees, the visitors noted that criminal conviction checks were not undertaken on application to the programme, rather they were undertaken before the trainee commenced any data collection as part of their research. The trainees confirmed that they did not pay for these checks and assumed that the cost was covered by the education provider. The visitors were concerned that criminal conviction checks were being undertaken once a trainee was on the programme and not as part of the admissions procedures and they were unsure of the processes which would be followed if a criminal conviction was declared. The visitors discussed this with the programme team who confirmed that going forward enhanced criminal conviction checks would be undertaken upon application to the programme and that applicants would be responsible for the cost of the check. To ensure the admissions procedures require criminal conviction checks to be undertaken on application to the programme and that applicants are informed of the process and any costs involved, the visitors would like to see this is reflected in revised admissions procedures.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must redraft the programme documentation, including the website information, to revise and clearly communicate the admissions procedures relating to any health requirements.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors learnt that applicants to the programme were required to undertake an occupational health (OH) assessment. During the visit, the visitors received amendments to the submitted documentation which removed the requirement for an OH assessment on application and outlined revised admissions procedures. The visitors discussed these with the programme team however, to ensure the admissions procedures relating to any health requirements are revised and are clearly communicated to applicants, the visitors would like to receive revised programme documentation (including the website information).

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that work placements are effectively managed.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors were unsure of how work placements were managed. From discussions with the programme team,

the visitors recognised that the primary placement for this programme would be as a PhD student within the Academic Unit (the education provider has recently moved from School to Academic Units). Other placement opportunities existed and these could be within the wider university setting or external to the education provider. The visitors learnt that trainees were responsible for finding their own placements and as part of their application to join the programme, a supervision plan and research proposal would be agreed. It was the role of the Supervisor to monitor that these were being met through their review of monthly reports and an annual review of the Portfolio of competences. The visitors confirmed that the Supervisor was an academic member of staff and that there were no individuals at the work placement responsible for supervising the trainee with the aim of observing and signing off learning outcomes. The visitors were concerned that the Supervisor was reviewing a reflexive piece of work written by the trainee and not observing the trainee within the work placement.

The visitors also learnt that where trainees were PhD students within the Academic Unit or wider university setting, the programme team did not plan to undertake any work placement approval or monitoring functions. These functions would only be undertaken when a trainee was undertaking work placements outside of the education provider.

The education provider has overall responsibly for placement learning and ensuring that suitable systems are in place to support it. The visitors were therefore concerned that, while placements were integral to the programme, the education provider did not approve and monitor all work placements or have the systems in place to objectively assess the trainees while on work placement. In order for this SET to be met, the visitors would like to receive further information on how the programme ensures all work placements are effectively managed.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the resources available to trainees on all work placements are effectively used.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to determine whether the trainee felt adequately supported. However, the visitors could not determine how the programme team identified what resources the education provider expected to be in place for trainees on work placement or how the programme team then determined whether the resources were effectively used. The visitors could also not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. The visitors would therefore like to receive further information about how the education provider ensures that the resources to support student learning are effectively used in all work placements.

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 ensure that the resources available to trainees on all work placements support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to determine whether the trainee felt adequately supported; and that the trainee and workplace contact were aware of the learning outcomes and assessment procedures while on work placement. However, the visitors could not determine how the programme team identified what resources the programme team expected to be in place for trainees on work placement or how the programme team then determined whether the resources effectively supported the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. The visitors could also not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. The visitors would therefore like to receive further information about how the education provider ensures that the resources to support student learning are effectively used in all work placements.

3.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that trainees on all work placements have access to adequate facilities to support their welfare and wellbeing.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to determine whether the trainee felt adequately supported. However, the visitors could not identify what resources or facilities to support welfare and wellbeing the education provider expected to be in place for trainees on work placement or how the education provider then determined whether they were adequate and accessible. The visitors could also not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. The visitors would therefore like to receive further information about how the education provider ensures that there are adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of trainees in all settings.

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 where trainees participate as service users, appropriate protocols are used to obtain their consent.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors learnt that trainees would be participating in role play during the voluntary Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) module. However they were unable to determine a formal process for obtaining trainee consent within the documentation. From the discussions with the trainees and the programme team, the visitors learnt that verbal consent is obtained during the CBT module and that participation is not mandatory. The programme team also discussed how they made applicants to the programme clear about what level of involvement was expected during the course of the programme.

The visitors were concerned that there was no formal protocol in place to detail how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained or how situations where trainees declined from participation were managed. In light of this, the visitors were not satisfied the programme gained informed consent from trainees or could appropriately manage situations where trainees declined to participate. The visitors therefore require the education provider to implement appropriate formal protocols for obtaining consent from trainees and for managing situations where trainees decline from participating.

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 the programme documentation to make explicit how the learning outcomes of the programme allow all trainees to meet the following standards of proficiency (SOPs);

- **1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**
    - o **understand the need to act in the best interests of the service users at all times**
    - o **understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council**
    - o **understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every patient including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing**
    - o **be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession**
    - o **understand the complex ethical and legal issues of any form of dual relationship and the impact these may have on clients**
    - o **understand the power imbalance between practitioners and clients and how this can be managed appropriately**

- **1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner**

- **1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**
    - **know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional**

- **1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers**
    - **understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluation diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals**
    - **be able to make appropriate referrals**

- **2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements**
    - **be able to recognise when (further) intervention is inappropriate, or unlikely to be helpful**

- **2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully**
    - **be able to implement psychological interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client and / or group**
    - **be able, on the basis of psychological formulation, to implement psychological therapy or other interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client**
    - **be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy**
    - **be able to choose and use a broad range of psychological interventions, appropriate to the client's needs and settings**

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider the visitors noted the units of competence outlined in the Programme Handbook and Handbook for Workplace Contacts. The visitors discussed how these learning outcomes translated to the SOPs and therefore how the education provider ensured that all trainees met the SOPs. The visitors learnt that trainees were assessed on the 57 competences outlined in the handbooks. The generic professional competence unit contains 7 over arching competences with 41 sub-competences and is assessed via a reflexive report of 3,000 words. The visitors were concerned about the number of sub-competences which the trainees appeared to have to evidence in the reflexive report. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were told that trainees only have to evidence the 7 over arching competences. The visitors felt that some of the sub-competences had direct links to the SOPs and therefore while these were outlined in the handbooks, it appeared feasible that a trainee may not receive training or be assessed on these SOPs. The SOPs outlined above are the instances when the visitors felt this was possible. The visitors would therefore like to receive revised documentation which clearly indicates how the programme ensures the above SOPs are met within the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements is in place.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. However, as outlined in the conditions against SETs 3.8, 3.9, 3.11, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9 and 5.11 the visitors could not identify how the programme team ensured that the work place setting was appropriate; provided the trainee with appropriate resources to support their learning and development; was safe; or was staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. The visitors could also not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. The education provider has overall responsibly for placement learning and ensuring that suitable systems are in place to support it. The visitors felt that the current systems did not provide a thorough or effective system to approve and monitor all work placements. To ensure that this SET is met, the visitors would like to receive documentation which illustrates a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all work place settings.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at all work placements to support trainees in their learning in a safe environment.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to ensure 'the workplace contact is appropriately qualified, registered, and experienced with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to support the trainee in the learning outcomes identified in the trainee's supervision plan'. However, the visitors could not identify what programme specific knowledge was required of the workplace contact and then how the programme team determined this. The visitors could also not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. Therefore the visitors would like to receive documentation which outlines how the education provider ensures that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at all work placement's to support trainees in their learning in a safe environment.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that workplace contacts have relevant, knowledge, skills and experience to support trainees and provide a safe environment for their learning.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to ensure 'the workplace contact is appropriately qualified, registered, and experienced with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to support the trainee in the learning outcomes identified in the trainee's supervision plan'. However, the visitors could not identify what programme specific knowledge, skills and experience was required of the workplace contact and then how the programme team determined this. The visitors could also not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. Therefore the visitors would like to receive documentation which outlines how the education provider ensures that the workplace contact has the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support trainees and provide a safe environment for their learning in all work placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to ensure 'the workplace contact is appropriately qualified, registered, and experienced with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to support the trainee in the learning outcomes identified in the trainee's supervision plan'. However, as outlined in the reasons for SETs 5.6 and 5.7, the visitors could not determine what programme specific knowledge, skills and experience was required of the workplace contact and then how the programme team determined this. From discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that workplace contacts were not required to undertake any training prior to a trainee starting their work placement. A Handbook for Workplace Contacts had recently been developed and would be provided to all workplace contacts. The visitors felt written support alone could be open to interpretation and therefore not sufficient to ensure consistency of support and approach among the different workplace contacts. The visitors felt that workplace contacts should receive relevant training to ensure that all trainees have as consistent experience as practicably possible when trying to achieve the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require evidence of what the programme team considers appropriate workplace contact training and how the team will check that contacts on work placements meet this requirement in order to show how this SET is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to ensure 'the workplace contact is appropriately qualified, registered, and experienced with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to support the trainee in the learning outcomes identified in the trainee's supervision plan'. The visitors could not determine how the programme team ensured this was the case for work placements in the Academic Unit or wider university setting as these work placements were not subject to approval or monitoring by the programme team. Therefore the visitors would like to receive documentation which outlines how the education provider ensures that the workplace contact is appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed, for all work placements.

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 ensure that workplace contacts are fully prepared for work placement.

Reason: From the documentation and in discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that a Workplace approval and monitoring form had to be completed for work placements external to the university. This form sought to ensure that the trainee and the workplace contact were aware of and understood the areas listed within this SET. From discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that workplace contacts were not required to undertake any training prior to a trainee starting their work placement. However a Handbook for Workplace Contacts had recently been developed and would be provided to all workplace contacts. The visitors felt that written support alone could be open to interpretation and was therefore not sufficient to ensure consistency of support and approach among the different workplace contacts. The visitors therefore require evidence of how the education provider ensures that workplace contacts are appropriately prepared for work placement and that the programme continues to meet this SET.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that clear procedures are in place so that service users are aware that trainees are involved and appropriate consent is gained.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors were unable to determine the procedures in place for trainees to inform service users that they are a trainee health psychologist. From discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that trainees have to inform service users of their trainee status and gain appropriate consent as soon as they undertake any research. However the visitors also noted that when trainees were on work placement and not undertaking research they were not required by the programme team to inform service users that they were trainees. The visitors felt that service users must be made aware that trainees are involved and gain appropriate consent to respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues. Therefore the visitors require evidence to demonstrate how the programme team make it clear to trainees that they must highlight their trainee status to service users while they are on the programme.

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 review the programme documentation to make explicit that where the learning outcomes allow trainees to meet the following SOPs are adequately assessed:

- **1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**
    - **understand the need to act in the best interests of the service users at all times**
    - **understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council**
    - **understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every patient including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing**
    - **be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession**
    - **understand the complex ethical and legal issues of any form of dual relationship and the impact these may have on clients**
    - **understand the power imbalance between practitioners and clients and how this can be managed appropriately**

- **1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner**

- **1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- o **know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional**

- **1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers**
  - o **understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluation diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals**
  - o **be able to make appropriate referrals**

- **2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements**
  - o **be able to recognise when (further) intervention is inappropriate, or unlikely to be helpful**

- **2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully**
  - o **be able to implement psychological interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client and / or group**
  - o **be able, on the basis of psychological formulation, to implement psychological therapy or other interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client**
  - o **be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy**
  - o **be able to choose and use a broad range of psychological interventions, appropriate to the client's needs and settings**

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider the visitors noted the units of competence as outlined in the Programme Handbook and Handbook for Workplace Contacts. The visitors discussed how the learning outcomes of the programme translated to the SOPs and therefore how the education provider ensured that all trainees met the SOPs. The visitors learnt that the trainees were assessed on 57 competences as outlined in the handbooks. The generic professional competence unit contains 7 over arching competences with 41 sub-competences and is assessed via a reflexive report of 3,000 words. The visitors were concerned about the number of sub-competences which the trainees appeared to have to evidence in the reflexive report. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were told that trainees only have to evidence the 7 over arching competences. This concerned the visitors as they felt that some of the sub-competences had direct links to the SOPs and therefore while they were outlined in the document, it was feasible that a trainee may not receive training or be assessed on some SOPs. The SOPs outlined above are the instances when the visitors felt this was possible.

Therefore in order to ensure that the learning outcomes ensure that all trainees meet all the SOPs the visitors would like to receive revised documentation which clearly indicates how the programme ensures the SOPs outlined above are assessed within the programme.

6.3 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that professional aspects of practice are integral to the assessment procedures of the work placement.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors were unable to identify the assessment which takes place while trainees are in the work place setting. From discussions with trainees and the programme team, the visitors learnt that all assessment is undertaken by the Supervisor through monthly reflexive reports and an annual review meeting of the Portfolio of competences. The visitors were concerned about the lack of assessment taking place in the work placement. The visitors felt there was therefore no objective assessment of the learning outcomes gained while in the work placement and they could not be sure professional aspects of practice were integral to the work placement assessment. In order for the visitors to be assured that this SET is met, the visitors would like to receive revised information outlining how the assessment procedures measure professional aspects of practice within the work placement.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the assessment methods employed measure the learning outcomes.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider the visitors noted the units of competence as outlined in the Programme Handbook and Handbook for Workplace Contacts. The visitors discussed how the learning outcomes of the programme translated to the SOPs and therefore how the education provider ensured that all trainees met the SOPs. The visitors learnt that the trainees were assessed on 57 competences as outlined in the handbooks. The generic professional competence unit contains 7 over arching competences with 41 sub-competences and is assessed via a reflexive report of 3,000 words. The visitors were concerned about the number of sub-competences which the trainees appeared to have to evidence in the reflexive report. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were told that trainees only have to evidence the 7 over arching competences. This concerned the visitors as they felt that some of the sub-competences had direct links to the SOPs and therefore while they were outlined in the document, it was apparently feasible that a trainee may not receive training or be assessed on some SOPs. The SOPs outlined in the conditions against SET 4.1 and 6.1 are the instances when the visitors felt this was possible.

Therefore in order to ensure that the assessment methods employed measure the learning outcomes the visitors would like to receive revised documentation which clearly indicates how the programme ensures the SOPs outlined in the conditions against SET 4.1 and 6.1 are assessed within the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the assessment methods employed appropriately measure the learning outcomes.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors were unable to identify the assessment which takes place while trainees are in the work place setting. From discussions with trainees and the programme team, the visitors learnt that all assessment is undertaken by the Supervisor through monthly reflexive reports and an annual review meeting of the Portfolio of Competences. The visitors were concerned about the lack of assessment taking place in the work placement. The visitors felt there was therefore no objective measurement of how the trainees were meeting the relevant the learning outcomes while on work placement and as such were unclear as to how the programme team were sure that trainees were meeting all of the relevant SOPs. In order for the visitors to be assured that this SET is met, the visitors would like to receive revised information outlining how the assessment methods objectively measure the learning outcomes of the work placement.

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: The education provider must ensure there are effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure consistency in the assessment of the Portfolio of competences.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt about the processes for trainees to graduate from the MPhil to the PhD and the assessment and monitoring processes in place for this. However the visitors noted that currently there are no internal or external mechanisms in place to review the assessment of the Portfolio of competences, which trainees complete while on work placement, to ensure consistency in marking. The visitors were therefore concerned that the marking of the Portfolio of competences maybe perceived to be inconsistent. As such the visitors felt that this may result in successful academic appeals being lodged and trainees progressing onto the PhD who the programme team may have concerns about. The visitors would therefore like to receive details of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure consistency of assessment of the Portfolio of competences.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly specify that an aegrotat award does not provide eligibility for admission onto the Register.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that an aegrotat award would not be conferred to any student exiting this programme.

However, this standard requires that the programme documentation clearly states this to avoid confusion and possible academic appeal. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to be updated to clearly specify that an aegrotat award would not be conferred and would not provide students with eligibility for admission to the Register. This is to provide clarity for students and to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider making the entry requirements relating to English language more easily accessible on the website.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider both before and at the visit, the visitors were satisfied that the admissions procedures applied selection and entry criteria in relation to English language. From the visitor's review of the website, they noted that these requirements were not outlined on the programme specific web pages and to find this information, applicants had to view the international applicant's section of the website. The visitors felt that some applicants may therefore miss the entry requirements relating to English language and would like to recommend that the education providers considers how it can make these requirements more easily accessible to potential applicants to assist in their decision about whether to take up a place on the programme.

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider including within the programme for staff development a need to maintain knowledge about the roles of the regulator and the professional body.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the senior and programme teams, the visitors were satisfied that this SET was met. The visitors did note from the various meetings at the visit that there was confusion between the role of the HPC and the British Psychological Society (BPS). The visitors felt that to enhance staff's professional knowledge, the education provider should consider implementing a need to keep knowledge of the regulator and professional body up-to-date.

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how it can best make trainees aware of the student complaints process.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that there was an appropriate student complaints process in place. From the meeting with trainees, the visitors noted that they were not aware that such a process existed. Trainees did say that if they had any concerns they would raise them with their Supervisor. The visitors felt that to ensure trainees were aware of the process the education provider should consider how it could best inform them of this process.

Commendations

The visitors wish to commend the following aspects of the programme:

Commendation: The visitors would like to commend the programme team on their commitment to providing trainees with opportunities for peer support through the organisation of the Monday lunch time sessions.

Reason: From the discussions with trainees the visitors learnt about the Monday lunch time sessions. These had been designed by the education provider to provide trainees with an additional level of support (in the form of peer support) during their course and were run once per month on a Monday. The Monday lunch time sessions were not previously run outside of term time but following a request from trainees, the programme team increased their frequency to take account of holidays. The visitors were very impressed with this level of commitment and felt that the Monday lunch time sessions were a unique and innovative approach to providing trainees with additional support.

Information about this can be found at
http://www.soton.ac.uk/psychology/postgraduate/research_degrees/degrees/mphil_phd_health_psychology_research_and_professional_practice_pgr.page

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