

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University Campus Suffolk
Validating body / Awarding body	Universities of East Anglia and Essex
Programme name	Diploma of Higher Education Operating Department Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Operating department practitioner
Date of visit	6 – 7 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 'Operating department practitioner' 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 June 2012. At the Committee meeting on 12 June 2012, the programme 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards, programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that 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 and validating body validated 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 the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider and the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Tony Scripps (Operating department practitioner) Julie Weir (Operating department practitioner)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Victoria Adenugba
Proposed student numbers	12 per cohort
First approved intake	September 2012
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	David Collins (University of Essex)
Secretary	Alison McQuin (University Campus Suffolk)
Members of the joint panel	Andrew Revitt (Internal Panel Member) Julie Macleod (Internal Panel Member) Sam Jarmin (Internal Panel Member) Alan Karkoska (External Panel Member) Dave Huggins (External Panel Member) Stephen White (External Panel Member) Alan Mount (College of Operating Department Practitioners)

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

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"/>

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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 52 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 5 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.

Conditions

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

Condition: The programme team must resubmit programme documentation once errors and omissions have been corrected and it has been approved by the education provider.

Reason: Discussions with the programme team highlighted several errors and omissions within the programme documentation submitted by the education provider. The programme team were made aware of the errors and omissions and agreed to amend the documentation in order for it to be accurate and suitable for use by students and placement providers. In order to ensure the revised programme documentation will be appropriate the visitors require the programme team to resubmit the final versions.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure that operating department practice specific skills and knowledge are being adequately addressed within the IPL module groups.

Reason: During discussions with students the visitors learnt there had been occasions where operating department practice (ODP) students felt excluded within the IPL groups. The visitors learnt that students signed themselves up to the IPL module groups rather than the education provider assigning students to groups. As the ODP student body is much smaller than the other allied health professions in the IPL module the ODP students were more likely to be underrepresented within their IPL groups, sometimes being the only ODP students within their group. The visitors learnt there had been instances where the role of an ODP was not fully understood by some facilitators of the IPL module. This meant ODP students feel discouraged from undertaking some lectures in the IPL module. The visitors were concerned ODP students could not fully benefit from the IPL module if the role of an ODP, including the profession-specific skills and knowledge, was not being adequately addressed by all IPL module facilitators. They were also concerned ODP students could not benefit from discussions if they were underrepresented within IPL groups. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team ensures ODP roles are fully understood by the IPL module group facilitators.

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

Condition: The programme team must submit further evidence to demonstrate there is enough support in place for students at placements and they can be assured there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff available at the placement settings.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included information from the mentor database. During discussions with the placement providers the visitors learnt refresher training for any mentor overseeing students needed to be taken every two years. It was raised by the joint panel that some of the mentors on the list had not updated their training since 2007. The placement providers stated the list had not been updated recently but maintained all current mentors who were overseeing students have had their refresher training within the last 2 years. The placement providers stated the mentors on the list that did not have current refresher training were no longer active mentors, if they wished to mentor again they would have to undergo refresher mentor training before overseeing students. Without an updated version of the mentor list the visitors could not accurately determine if there was enough support in place for students at placements. The visitors were also concerned the education provider would be unable to determine the mentors who were currently active and able to oversee students and therefore be unable to be assured there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff available at the placement settings. Therefore the visitors require evidence that there is enough support in place for students at placements and that the education provider is able to demonstrate there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff available at the placement settings.

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

Condition: The programme team must submit further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure mentors have undertaken refresher training before working with students.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included information from a mentor database. During discussions with the placement providers the visitors learnt that refresher training for any mentor overseeing students needed to be taken every two years. It was raised by the panel that some of the mentors on the list had not updated their training since 2007. The placement providers stated the list had not been updated recently but maintained all current mentors who were overseeing students have had their refresher training within the last 2 years. They stated mentors on the list who did not have current refresher training were no longer mentors and they would have to undergo refresher mentor training before overseeing students. The visitors were concerned the current mechanisms in place did not frequently monitor the training status of mentors, the information provided prior and at the visit was inaccurate and out of date including on it the names of staff who were no longer mentors. The visitors

require further evidence to ensure the programme team robustly checks mentors training status before students go on placement. .

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 programme team must submit evidence of the guidance to be provided for staff supervising students on surgical wards and at critical care placements.

Reason: Visitors learnt from the documentation provided prior to the visit that within the new programme students will have two new placements, a “2 week placement on a surgical ward and a 2 week placement in a critical care area” (Self-evaluation document for the periodic review). The visitors learnt through discussions with the programme team that guidance would be provided to ward staff before they oversaw any students to fully prepare them. The visitors have not been provided with the guidance to be used for these particular placement settings. The visitors need to be sure staff on the surgical wards and at critical care placements will be fully prepared for placement, including awareness of the competencies students must meet and how this should be facilitated. The visitors therefore require evidence of the placement guidance to be sure it suitably prepares practice placement providers and practice placement educators for working with students.

Recommendations

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards.

Recommendation: The education provider could consider giving examples of 'non standard applicants' for the alternative entry routes to the programme.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met. It was stated within programme specification that 'non standard applicants' could apply to the programme. To provide additional transparency to potential applicants the visitors suggest that a few examples of the 'non-standard applicants' and entry routes to the programme could be added to the advertising material for this programme.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Recommendation: The education provider could consider uploading the number of students completed practice hours on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)..

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met. During discussions with the students the visitors learnt some were unsure of how many practice hours they had gained and would like a simple way of checking this. To make it easier for students to find out the number of practice hours they have acquired the visitors suggest the education provider upload the number of completed practice hours on the VLE, in this way students could keep track of their completed hours regardless of where they are.

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

Recommendation: The education provider could consider reviewing how the practical aspects of the programme could be assessed in a way that reduces the duplication of assessing.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met. Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the education provider assessed the competencies within the students practice portfolio without the practice placement mentor's input. The mentors would assess competencies undertaken at placement in a separate method. The visitors felt this could lead to duplication of the students undertaking different methods to meet the different assessments of the same competencies. The visitors suggest the education provider look to reducing duplication by combining the two assessments undertaken or by having the education provider work with the placement mentor on one set of assessments.