Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science)
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	21 – 22 September 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 '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 22 February 2012. At the Committee meeting on 22 February 2012 the approval of the programme was 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

This visit was the result of the education provider amending their currently approved BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science (Clinical) 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.

The education provider plans to recruit students to a generic programme – BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Life Sciences). During the second year of this programme the students decide which of four pathways they wish to complete. The programme award reflects the pathway title the student has completed. The visitors will recommend approval for this pathway title – BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science).

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 the following programmes: BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Infection Science), BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Blood Science), and BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Tissue Science). 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. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. 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 decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Christine Murphy (Biomedical scientist) Mary Pepeck (Biomedical scientist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	Maximum of 27 per cohort across all pathways (Genetic Science, Tissue Science, Infection Science and Blood Science)
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2011

Chair	Roger Conlan (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Secretary	Dave Nolan (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Members of the joint panel	Neville Hall (Institute of Biomedical Science) Dan Smith (Institute of Biomedical Science) Alan Wainright (Institute of Biomedical Science)

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	☐	☐	☒
Supplementary Documentation	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

The HPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme and the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Life Sciences) programme. The students from the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Life Sciences) programme had not yet decided the Healthcare Science pathway they would be completing; they were part of the first cohort for this programme.

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.

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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 42 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 15 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

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 programme team must revise all programme documentation and advertising materials to ensure references to the programme award are accurate.

Reason: This programme is part of a suite of programmes under the generic title of 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare (Life Sciences)'. Students enrol on this generic programme and are required to choose a pathway through the programme that leads to the specific programme award of 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science)'. The HPC holds the title of the pathways as the approved programme, which leads to eligibility to apply for registration with the HPC. The documentation submitted by the programme team prior to the visit used the generic title of the programme throughout, "We look forward to working with you and to helping you achieve your goal of gaining a BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Life Sciences) degree. This degree has been approved by both the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Health Professions Council and conferment of this degree makes you eligible to apply for Health Professions Council Registration." (Programme handbook, p1)

The visitors considered this to be confusing for the students and potential applicants for the programme. The visitors considered this implies the approved programme title is 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Life Sciences)' which is not correct. The approved programme award title the students would graduate with is 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science)'.

The visitors were satisfied with the generic programme award being used to reference the suite of programmes; however, for accuracy they require the additional pathway titles to be included whenever the title of the programme is referred to. Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to revise all programme documentation and advertising materials to ensure accuracy when referring to the programme title.

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 programme team must revise the programme documentation and advertising materials to ensure they clearly articulate the placement structure and the financial support mechanisms for placement activity.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the programme documentation and advertising materials prior to the visit. The website materials stated this is a programme with placements but gave no further detail about them. The programme is structured so the bulk of the placements take place in the summer at the end of levels one, two and three, this means the programme runs straight through three full years.

The visitors considered students may wish to spend time during the summer months earning money to help fund them through the next academic year. If students are unable to do this it may affect their decision about whether to apply for this programme. The visitors judged the structure of the placements to be important for potential applicants and students to be aware of.

The documents submitted prior to the visit referred to the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) financially supporting students for their clinical placement activity (Contextual documentation for Accreditation/Reaccreditation, p9). At the visit, the programme team and a representative from the SHA confirmed this commitment. The visitors considered the details of this financial support (how it is transferred to the student and the amount) to be important information for potential applicants and students on the programme.

The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation and advertising materials to ensure they clearly articulate the placement structure and the financial support mechanisms for placement activity.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence to demonstrate they are committed to limiting the risks associated with arranging placements and have a plan in place if a placement becomes unavailable for a student.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit looked at the placement arrangements for the programme. This programme is part of a suite of programmes under the generic title of 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare (Life Sciences)'. Students enrol on this generic programme and then are required to choose a pathway through the programme that leads to the specific programme award of 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science)'. At the end of level one, students choose their pathway field preference, competitive interviews are held and as a result students are placed into a particular programme pathway. The pathway they are placed into will determine the field of their placement at the end of levels two and three. Level two is comprised of generic modules and then a pathway specific module. Three of the pathways (Genetic, Blood and Tissue Sciences) will take one module while the other pathway (Infection Science) takes a different module. In level three, all pathways are taught separately. The programme team confirmed that students could transfer between the Genetic, Blood and Tissue Sciences pathways but not from the Infection Sciences pathway. Transfer between pathways can only occur before the second year summer placement.

Discussion with the programme team indicated the placements will agree to hold a certain number of places for students in particular fields for placements in level one, two and three. They have agreed this will be arranged nine months before that cohort starts. This arrangement is made on informal discussions between the programme team and the placement providers. The existing programmes working with these placement providers have built up a strong network between placements and the education provider.

The visitors were satisfied with the strong network of placement providers that work with the programme team, however were unable to determine how the programme could guarantee a placement would be available for a particular student in their particular field. The visitors considered the placement providers may agree to take a student on placement before the cohort commences and then may have to change those arrangements in either level one or level two of the programme. This could therefore result in the student having no placement and alternative arrangements having to be made. Due to the nature of the pathways, if a student was on either the Genetic, Blood or Tissue Sciences they would be able to switch pathways and so increase the chances of finding an alternative placement site. If the student was on the Infection Science pathway they would be unable to switch between pathways and so there could be more problems in seeking an alternative placement.

The programme team discussed the possibility for a student to be able to defer a placement if necessary. This could have an impact on the original number of placement places needed if changes are made in an academic year and more places are required the following year.

The visitors were concerned a situation could arise where a student on a particular pathway might not be able to continue with their practical training in that pathway if their placement place became unavailable. The visitors require reassurance the programme team have made this possibility clear for the students on the programme before they take up an offer of a place. The visitors also require reassurance the programme team are aware of the potential difficulties and have taken steps to limit the occurrence (such as a signed memorandum of understanding with placements) and have a plan in place for finding new placements should this occur.

Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to submit further evidence to demonstrate the programme team are committed to limiting the risks associated with arranging placements and have a plan in place for if a placement becomes unavailable for a student.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure the programme documentation is finalised for the programme.

Reason: Not all the documentation submitted prior to the visit were finalised versions. Because the programme is running with students, the visitors highlighted the documentation should all be finalised as soon as possible. For example, the module handbook for the Interprofessional Practice module (UZYSFD-20-2) did not have this programme included in the list of programmes that the module will be contributing to, on the front of the document. The visitors were also aware that as a result of the visit and the conditions detailed in this report, documentation would need to be revised. The visitors therefore require the programme team to ensure all documentation is finalised as soon as possible.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure the terminology in use is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for biomedical scientists and contains accurate information about the programme.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit contained occurrences of misleading information. The visitors noted instances where the title of 'Healthcare Science Practitioner' is used, "to practice as a Healthcare Science Practitioner" and "…student can undertake the full breadth of practice expected of a newly qualified Healthcare Science Practitioner" (Placement Handbook, p7). The HPC does not regulate 'Healthcare Science Practitioners' and so the title of 'Healthcare Science Practitioners' is not a protected title. The HPC regulates 'Biomedical scientists' and the protected title for this profession is 'Biomedical Scientist'.

The visitors considered the documentation to be misleading for potential applicants and students with the implication that upon completion of the programme students will be able to register with the HPC and then be able to use the title of 'Healthcare Science Practitioner'. Upon completion of the programme, and with successful application to the HPC Register, the protected title students will be able to use will be 'Biomedical scientist'. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure the protected title of 'Biomedical scientist' is clearly articulated throughout and the current landscape of 'healthcare science practitioners' is clearly explained.

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Condition: The programme team must revise programme documentation to clearly articulate the different options available to support students should they fail an aspect of the programme.

Reason: The programme documentation submitted prior to the visit included a diagram of the pattern of programme delivery (Programme handbook, p5). From this diagram the visitors noted the structure of the programme means students' progress straight through academic work and placement work for the three years of the programme with no summer holidays. The visitors had concerns if a student failed an aspect of the programme, there would be significant pressure on that student to manage any exam re-sits or placement retakes whilst they continued through the programme. When this was discussed with the programme team, it was indicated there were informal options available for a student who fails an exam or a placement. The programme team highlighted that communication between the placement supervisor and the personal tutor is crucial for support to the student and that each case is looked at on an individual basis.

The programme team highlighted if an exam was failed before a placement, it was possible for allocated time to be negotiated between the personal tutor and the placement supervisor for the student. This would allow the student to have time to prepare for examination re-sits. The programme team described the option for students to defer placements if necessary and to halt progression to the following academic year if aspects of the previous year needed to be retaken. There was also the option for the personal tutor and the placement supervisor to review the learning outcomes intended to be assessed at one placement and to defer them to following placements. This would effectively allow the student to 'step back' from the placement and concentrate on examination re-sits with no detrimental effect to either the current placement or progression on from that placement.

The visitors noted the programme handbook had a section about passing academic modules (Student Handbook, p9-10) however did not include information about the options available for students should they fail an aspect of academic work or a placement. It can be seen that close communication between the placement supervisors and the personal tutors is important when considering the best course of action for a student who has failed an aspect of the programme. It is important that the placement providers are aware of these options when working with students from the programme. It is important for the students to be aware of the support arrangements in place should they need to be used.

Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to revise programme documentation to include information about the different options available to support students should they fail an aspect 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 programme team must implement written protocols to obtain consent for when students participate as service users, and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users, in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: Through the tour of facilities, the visitors noted there would be some aspects of practical or clinical teaching where students would be participating as service users. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted students were notified they could 'opt-out' of participating as service users in practical and clinical teaching through posters informing students of this option. There was no formal information regarding consent protocols in place, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained or how situations where students declined from participation were managed. In light of this, the visitors were not satisfied the programme gained informed consent from students to participate in the practical and clinical teaching. A common way to obtain informed consent is via a form to be signed as part of the admission procedures. The form could inform students about the possible scenarios they are expected to undertake and to detail the procedures for 'opting-out' taking account of cultural differences and the students health.

The visitors require the education provider to implement formal protocols for obtaining consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

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.

Condition: The programme team must revise programme documentation to clearly identify the minimum attendance requirements for placements and the associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Reason: The programme documentation submitted prior to the visit did not clearly specify the minimum attendance requirements or the associated monitoring mechanisms in place for students at placement. Discussions with the programme team indicated the Placement Learning Unit (PLU) would monitor the attendance at placements and inform the programme leader of absences if necessary. The programme team also indicated the PLU systems were being modified to give the programme team more control. The programme team highlighted attendance records would be taken into account when awarding the student with the final programme award and so could affect that decision.

From the evidence received, the visitors were not satisfied the requirements of attendance at placement were being fully communicated to the students and placement providers or were being monitored in a way that allows the programme team to be aware of absences. The visitors noted if all parties involved with placement were not aware of the threshold requirement, it would be difficult for the programme team to monitor and take action to ensure absence does not affect a trainee's learning and development on placement.

The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide programme documentation that clearly communicates to students, placement staff and programme staff, the minimum attendance requirements for placements and the associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure placement providers carry out regular risk assessments.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated one of the factors the education provider uses when determining if placements can be approved is if the IBMS has approved that site (SETs Mapping Document SET 5.4). The visitors are aware however that the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories as suitable for training purposes. The education provider needs an effective approval and monitoring system that allows the programme team to maintain overall responsibility for the placements and to determine that the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

In light of the fact the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories, the visitors stressed the importance of ensuring genetic laboratory placements for this programme will have completed appropriate risk assessments as part of the initial approval and on-going monitoring processes. Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure placement providers carry out regular risk assessments.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence to demonstrate placements for the programme are subject to formal approval and monitoring processes. This should include documented processes for initial approval and systems in place for the on-going monitoring of placements.

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit the visitors could not find enough evidence of documented processes in place for the initial approval and on-going monitoring of placements. There was no information provided regarding the initial approval processes by which the programme team can evaluate and record the suitability of the placements to be used. Discussions at the visit indicated the programme would link to the education providers Placement Learning Unit (PLU). The programme team highlighted they were undergoing some development with the PLU in order that they could have more responsibility with managing the placements for their programme. The visitors could not review the approval and monitoring systems in place for this programme because these developments were not ready.

At the visit the visitors were provided with the PLU's current placement self-assessment audit form, this was based on the HPC's standards of education and training (SETs), in particular SET 5. The programme team indicated that with the existing programmes the programme team would visit a new placement site as part of the initial placement approval process. After this initial visit, the self-assessment audit form completed annually would be used to monitor the placements.

The visitors were satisfied with the current PLU self-assessment form and the visits to new placement sites. The visitors were however, concerned the programme team did not verify the self-assessment forms and so may not be monitoring placements effectively. The visitors were aware that it would be difficult to audit every placement via a visit annually but noted visits to placements to see students could be used to verify details of the self-assessment form.

In order to ensure the programme team maintains overall responsibility for the placements and the approval and monitoring systems for placements are thorough and effective, the visitors require the programme team to submit information about the approval and monitoring processes that will be in place for this programme.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The programme team must ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated one of the factors the education provider uses when determining if placements can be approved is if the IBMS has approved that site (SETs Mapping Document SET 5.4). The visitors are aware however that the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories as suitable for training purposes. The education provider needs an effective approval and monitoring system that allows the programme team to maintain overall responsibility for the placements and to determine that the practice placement settings have equality and diversity policies in place.
In light of the fact the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories, the visitors stressed the importance of ensuring genetic laboratory placements for this programme will have completed equality and diversity policies as part of the initial approval and on-going monitoring processes. Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated one of the factors the education provider uses when determining if placements can be approved is if the IBMS has approved that site (SETs Mapping Document SET 5.4). The visitors are aware however that the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories as suitable for training purposes. The education provider needs an effective approval and monitoring system that allows the programme team to maintain overall responsibility for the placements and to determine that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place.
In light of the fact the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories, the visitors stressed the importance of ensuring genetic laboratory placements for this programme will have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place as part of the initial approval and on-going monitoring processes . Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated one of the factors the education provider uses when determining if placements can be approved is if the IBMS has approved that site (SETs Mapping Document SET 5.4).. The visitors are aware however that the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories as suitable for training purposes. The education provider needs an effective approval and monitoring system that allows the programme team to maintain overall responsibility for the placements and to ensure practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. In light of the fact the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories, the visitors stressed the importance of ensuring genetic laboratory placements for this programme have practice placement educators that have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience as part of the initial approval and on-going monitoring processes . Therefore, the visitors require the programme team to ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further information about the content of the practice placement educator training workshops they plan to deliver for the practice placement educators for this programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated the programme team intends to use placement provider workshops delivered by the education provider. These workshops are to inform practice placement educators about the requirements of this programme. The visitors received no information regarding the content of these training workshops. The visitors were therefore unclear as to how the programme team would ensure practice placement educators are appropriately oriented to the requirements of this particular programme. The training should include details of the learning outcomes and assessment procedures, the support available for students and practice placement educators, information of the pathway and module structure of the programme and information about the final year research module. The training sessions should ensure practice placement educators are informed when changes are made to the programme. The visitors therefore require further information regarding the programme specific information delivered to practice placement providers to ensure they are appropriately trained to work with students from this programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further information about the training sessions intended to provide practice placement educators information about assessment of the PTP Training Manual.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated the programme team intends to use the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) 'Train the trainer' sessions. The 'Train the trainer' sessions are to inform practice placement educators about the MSC Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) curriculum, the PTP Training Manual and the associated online assessment tool. Discussion at the visit indicated the PTP Training Manual was in a draft format and the online assessment tool had not yet been produced. The programme team however, were confident the uncertainty of the assessment of the PTP Training manual would be resolved and if not, alternative assessment arrangements could be made. The visitors received no information regarding the content of the MSC 'Train the trainer' sessions which would inform the placement educators of the particulars of the assessment for the placements. There was no information available regarding dates and scheduled sessions for practice placement educators. Without this information the visitors were unable to determine how the programme team would ensure the placement providers would be prepared to work with students from this programme in light of the specific PTP Training Manual and the online assessment tool. Therefore, the visitors require further information about the content and scheduling of the MSC 'Train the trainer' sessions (or if any equivalent sessions are arranged) for the assessment of the PTP Training Manual to ensure the practice placement educators are appropriately trained.

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

Condition: the programme team must ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure practice placement educators are appropriately registered or have other arrangements agreed.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated one of the factors the education provider uses when determining if placements can be approved is if the IBMS has approved that site (SETs Mapping Document SET 5.4).. The visitors are aware however that the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories as suitable for training purposes. The education provider needs an effective approval and monitoring system that allows the programme team to maintain overall responsibility for the placements and to ensure practice placement educators are appropriately registered or have agreed other arrangements. In light of the fact the IBMS do not approve genetic laboratories, the visitors stressed the importance of ensuring genetic laboratory placements for this programme have practice placement educators who are appropriately registered or have agreed other arrangements, as part of the initial approval and on-going monitoring processes . Therefore, the visitors require the programme

team to ensure the placement approval and monitoring processes for genetic laboratory placements ensure practice placement educators are appropriately registered or have other arrangements agreed.

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 provide evidence that demonstrates students and practice placement educators are appropriately informed of the planned assessment procedures for the PTP Training Manual.

Reason: From the documentation submitted, the visitors were unclear as to how the placement learning outcomes would be assessed. At the visit, it was confirmed the programme intends to use the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) curriculum, the PTP Training Manual and the associated online assessment tool for placements. At the visit, the visitors saw a draft version of the PTP Training Manual and it was noted that the online assessment tool had not yet been developed by MSC. The visitors were concerned the online assessment tool would not be completed by the time the students go out to their first placement. The programme team stated the PTP Training Manual contained information on the assessment criteria and so could be used to implement an alternative assessment tool to assess students whilst the online assessment tool was being developed. The visitors noted the draft PTP Training Manual contained some information regarding assessment methods (case based discussions (CbDs), directly observed procedures / direct observation of practical skills (DOPs)) however, it indicated the details of the different CbDs and DOPs would be found on the online assessment tool. The programme documentation did not include any information about the procedures for assessment at placement using the PTP Training Manual because procedures have not yet been finalised.

Due to the unconfirmed arrangements for the assessment of the PTP Training Manual, the visitors were unable to determine what information is being given to students and practice placement educators in order to prepare them for the placement. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence that demonstrates students and practice placement educators are appropriately informed of the planned assessment procedures for the PTP Training Manual.

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 submit revised placement programme documentation that has had instances of confusing and inconsistent information removed.

Reason: The Placement Handbook / Learning Agreement submitted prior to the visit contained information that was inconsistent and confusing. The handbook was confusing in its references to assessment on placement. The programme team confirmed at the visit that students would be undertaking a Training Portfolio (which is based on the institute of Biomedical Science registration training portfolio) and the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) Training Manual.

The visitors noted the handbook is unclear in places when describing the assessment and often only references the PTP Training manual, for example, “Professional requirements: Successful completion of the Healthcare Science (Life sciences) Training Manual” (Placement Handbook / Learning Agreement, p13). The visitors noted in other places, the handbook only discusses the Registration Training Portfolio, for example, “It must be clearly understood by all students that the procedure described below is designed to allow them to complete the Registration Training Portfolio” (Placement Handbook / Learning Agreement, p10). There is also a picture on p9 of the online system that students will use and it is of the IBMS Laboratory-based Learning Agreement e-portfolio. This e-portfolio is referenced through the responsibilities of parties to the agreement.

The visitors understood the two assessment methods of the PTP Training Manual and the Training Portfolio is complicated. Because of this, they have stressed the importance of ensuring the programme documentation is as clear as possible for the students. The visitors therefore require the programme team to review and revise the programme placement documentation to ensure students will be clear as to the two assessment methods being used.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence that demonstrates how the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) Training Manual will be assessed.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors were unclear as to how the placement learning outcomes would be assessed. At the visit, it was confirmed the programme intends to use the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) curriculum, the PTP Training Manual and the associated online assessment tool on placements. At the visit, the visitors saw a draft version of the PTP Training Manual and it was noted that the online assessment tool had not yet been developed by MSC. The programme team stated the PTP Training Manual contained information on the assessment criteria and so could be used to implement an alternative assessment tool to assess students whilst the online assessment tool was being developed. The visitors noted the draft PTP Training Manual contained some information regarding assessment methods (case based discussions (CbDs), directly observed procedures / direct observation of practical skills (DOPs)) however, it indicated the details of the different CbDs and DOPs would be found on the online assessment tool. Due to the unconfirmed arrangements for the assessment of placement, the visitors were unable to determine whether the assessment methods employed at placement would appropriately measure the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence that demonstrates how the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) Training Manual will be assessed.

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