

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Programme name	MSc Radiotherapy & Oncology
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Radiographer
Relevant modality / domain	Therapeutic radiography
Date of visit	30 September 2010 – 1 October 2010

Contents

Contents	1
Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6
Recommendations.....	11

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 'Radiographer' or 'Therapeutic radiographer' 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 9 December 2010. At the Committee meeting on 9 December 2010, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was 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	Kathryn Burgess (Therapeutic radiographer) Simon Walker (Therapeutic radiographer)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	12
Proposed start date of programme approval	14 February 2011
Chair	David James (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Secretary	Sarah Gutteridge (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Members of the joint panel	Carolyn Bromfield (Internal Panel Member) Kate Brooks (Internal Panel Member) Wendy Woodland (Internal Panel Member) Geraldine Francis (External Panel Member) Hazel Colyer (Society and College of Radiographers)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dissertation handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

During the visit the HPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators/mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC met with second year students from the BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy programme who are already first degree holders as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 46 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 11 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials to ensure that applicants can clearly access information about the application process and the funding arrangements available to students to ensure that they can make an informed choice about whether to apply or take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that potential applicants may not be able to clearly access information about the application process. The visitors need to see the programme documentation including advertising materials amended to clearly outline the application process, to highlight the fact that a clinical visit is required as part of the application process and that an interview will be required involving the programme team and practice placement representatives.

The visitors also noted that the programme documentation does not clearly highlight the funding arrangements (such as bursaries and loans) available to students and therefore require the programme documentation including advertising materials to be amended to make this information more accessible to potential applicants. The visitors require the education provider to inform potential applicants that the programme will involve the need for some students to travel to practice placements and stay away from the main site where the programme is delivered. The funding arrangements for this travel and accommodation must also be clearly highlighted to potential applicants. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials to ensure that it gives the applicant the information they need around criminal record checks to ensure that they can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and advertising materials it was clear that the education provider does not clearly and universally outline the admissions requirements in terms of criminal conviction checks. The visitors noted that some of this information was available within the documentation but was often difficult to find and felt that a potential applicant would find it difficult to access. The visitors therefore require the education provider to clearly articulate these details within all programme documentation and advertising materials to allow applicants to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials to ensure that it gives the applicant the information they need around health requirements to ensure that they can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and advertising materials it was clear that the education provider does not clearly and universally outline the admissions requirements in terms of health check compliance. The visitors noted that some of this information was available within the documentation but was often difficult to find and felt that a potential applicant would find it difficult to access. The visitors therefore require the education provider to clearly articulate these details within all programme documentation and advertising materials to allow applicants to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) and other inclusion mechanisms are clearly explained and articulated to applicants and students.

Reason: From the documentation provided and from discussions with the programme team the visitors could not determine how the education provider informs applicants and trainees of the inclusion mechanisms that the education provider has in place, including AP(E)L. The visitors noted that they were provided with evidence of a procedure for AP(E)L, however they require further information to demonstrate how the education provider explains AP(E)L and widening-participation policies to applicants and students, including the policies and procedures for agreeing and awarding credits, an idea of how much experience and learning the education provider will accept and the associated costs. The visitors therefore require further information to ensure that this standard is met.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly outline the staffing arrangements that are in place to demonstrate that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with senior management and the programme team the visitors noted that the education provider is planning to run the proposed MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology programme as well as the current HPC approved BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy programme. The visitors also noted that the education provider intends to increase the total cohort size across their radiotherapy programmes and has not outlined plans for any extra staffing provision. The visitors require

evidence detailing the staffing arrangements in place to facilitate both an increase in total cohort size and also how the staffing provision will work across the different radiotherapy programmes.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of a clear programme management structure and clearly highlight the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in this structure, as well as detailing their respective roles and responsibilities on other associated radiotherapy programmes delivered by the education provider.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team and a review of the programme documentation the visitors were not clear about the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the proposed MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology programme. The visitors noted that the education provider is planning to run the proposed MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology programme as well as the current HPC approved BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy programme. Given the fact that the programme team will be involved in the delivery of both the approved BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and the proposed MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology programmes the visitors require clear evidence of the programme management structure that clearly highlights the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved across both programmes.

3.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must further demonstrate how the named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced.

Reason: From a review of the programme leader's CV the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced. The visitors are yet to see evidence to suggest that the programme leader has had previous experience of leading a programme of study and previous experience of working in a higher education setting at a postgraduate level. The visitors also noted that the programme leader is yet to complete a master's level qualification. The visitors therefore require further information to ensure that this standard is met.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From discussions with the senior management team the visitors noted that the education provider plans to run the proposed MSc Radiotherapy and

Oncology programme as well as the current HPC approved BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy programme. The visitors also noted that the education provider intends to increase the total cohort size across their radiotherapy programmes and has not outlined plans for any extra staffing provision. As the visitors are required to look at staffing within the overall context of the education that the education provider offers, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff are in place to deliver an effective programme given the fact that two programmes will be running simultaneously. The visitors require further evidence to outline the staffing provision across the two programmes, including the time they are allocated to each programme and arrangements that are in place to deal with situations such as staff absences.

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

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

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted evidence of a consent form. The visitors however did not see any evidence of guidelines to support this document and were unable to investigate how the consent procedure is implemented to mitigate any risk involved in trainees participating as service users. The visitors require further evidence to show the consent policy in place, how the education provider will collect consent and also how they will inform students about this policy and their right to confidentiality.

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the range of learning and teaching approaches used is appropriate to the effective delivery of the radiation science curriculum.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the delivery of radiation science is delivered via self-directed study. The visitors noted that the expectation would be that the delivery of radiation science at master's level would have a taught element. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the range of learning and teaching approaches used is appropriate to the effective delivery of the radiation science curriculum, with specific reference to the radiation science aspects of SOP 3a.1.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment of students on practice placement.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that students have to pass a practice placement on the first attempt to progress on the programme and that no re-sit is available. The visitors also noted that the assessment tool used by the practice placement educators to assess students whilst on placement does not allow any element of the assessment to be failed. The visitors were concerned that if a student failed an element of the practice placement they would be removed from the programme without the opportunity to develop this failed area. The visitors require further evidence, outlining how a failing student is supported on practice placement and how they are supported by the education provider during clinical visits to identify weak areas that need to be developed and, if appropriate, action plans formed. The visitors therefore require further information to ensure that this standard is met.

Recommendations

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider introducing a practice placements' induction earlier in the programme.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors were happy that the requirements of the HPC relating to this standard were being met. However the visitors did note that the practice placement in year one does not take place until the end of the year. The visitors recommend that the education provider considers giving students an introduction to the placement setting earlier in the programme to allow students to gain a sense of what to expect from the practice placement element of the programme given the issues with attrition within the profession.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider keeping a record of the practice placement educators' HPC Registration numbers.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors were happy that the requirements of the HPC relating to this standard were being met. The visitors did however feel that the education provider should consider keeping a record of the practice placement educators HPC Registration numbers as part of the practice placement audit process. The visitors suggest this would demonstrate best-practice and ensure that the education provider can continually monitor the registration status of the practice placement educators.

Kathryn Burgess
Simon Walker