

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Anglia Ruskin University
Validating body / Awarding body	Anglia Ruskin University
Programme name	FDS <i>c</i> in Hearing Aid Audiology Audiology
Mode of delivery	Distance learning
Relevant part of HPC Register	Hearing aid dispensers
Date of visit	14 – 15 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 'Hearing aid dispenser' 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 23 August 2012. At the Committee meeting on 23 August 2012, 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 Hearing aid dispenser profession came onto the register in April 2010 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 an HPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Timothy Pringle (Hearing Aid Audiologist) Richard Sykes (Hearing Aid Audiologist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Victoria Adenugba
HPC observer	David Christopher
Proposed student numbers	55 per cohort
First approved intake	July 2008
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Les James (Anglia Ruskin University)
Secretary	Vicky McCormick (Anglia Ruskin University)

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	<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 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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 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 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

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.

Condition: The education provider must ensure the integration of theory and practice by revising programme documentation to reflect students' daily practice and provide a place for supervisors to feedback and sign off students' competencies.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included a 'Clinical Skills Logbook' for each semester in which students detailed what core competencies they had achieved. Space was provided within the logbooks to detail the date a competency was observed, carried out under direct supervision and carried out with indirect supervision. The visitors were concerned that currently the logbook did not reflect the actual duration of hours or number of times a student practiced a procedure which could mean that while students received enough theory they may not receive enough practice which could hinder them of the opportunity to achieve the standards of proficiency. During discussions with students and the programme team the visitors learnt that placement supervisors did not sign off students competencies but they were assessed by the education provider via Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OCSEs). The visitors were concerned that if supervisors were not required to formally document their reflections and sign off students competencies at practice they could take a passive involvement in a students' learning. To ensure that theory and practice is integrated and supervisors take a proactive role in a students learning the visitors require further evidence.

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

Condition: The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for monitoring placements.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team the visitors are satisfied that the programme has a thorough and effective system for approving placements however the visitors were unable to determine the robust nature of the ongoing monitoring of placements and placement supervisors. As the education provider has overall responsibility to ensure that there are thorough and effective systems in place to monitor all placements the visitors require further evidence of how placements will be regularly monitored.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure there is a process in place for all supervisors to receive training before receiving students regardless of their date of appointment.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt that if a supervisor could no longer oversee a student's learning and a replacement supervisor would be sort and approved. The new supervisor would not be invited to a training day held by the education provider if one had already passed instead they would be given slides from the training day and this may be followed up with a call from one member of the programme team before they received a student. The visitors considered that this was a good way of ensuring that practice placement educators were trained to ensure that they could be clear on learning outcomes and assessment procedures. The visitors were concerned that there was no formal policy in place to ensure that this process took place before a new supervisor received the student. The visitors were also concerned that without this policy there was a possibility of a new supervisor not receiving a call from a member of the programme team to discuss the slides to ensure the new supervisor understood their role and responsibilities. To ensure that all supervisors receive adequate training the visitors require the policy that will be put into place for supervisors who miss the supervisor training days.

Timothy Pringle
Richard Sykes