hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

| Name of education provider | Mary Hare |
|---|---|
| **Validating body / Awarding body** | Oxford Brookes University |
| **Programme name** | Foundation Degree in Hearing Aid Audiology |
| **Mode of delivery** | Full time |
| **Relevant part of HPC Register** | Hearing aid dispensers |
| **Date of visit** | 22 - 23 May 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 and validating/awarding body 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 | Hugh Crawford (Hearing aid dispenser) <br> Richard Sykes (Hearing aid dispenser) |
|---|---|
| HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance) | Victoria Adenugba |
| Proposed student numbers | 12 per cohort |
| First approved intake | July 2009 |
| Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from | September 2012 |
| Chair | Barry Downes (British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists) |
| Secretary | Andria Thomas (Mary Hare) |

## Sources of evidence

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

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|
| Programme specification | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Descriptions of the modules | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Practice placement handbook | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Student handbook | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Curriculum vitae for relevant staff | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| External examiners' reports from the last two years | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

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

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Programme team | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Placements providers and educators/mentors | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Students | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Learning resources | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms) | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

## Recommended outcome

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

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

The visitors agreed that 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 4 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

**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 review the programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HPC.

**Reason:** The documentation submitted by the education provider included references to the programme which do not comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. The 'Student handbook 2012-2014' stated that the 'programme leads to the ability to register with the Health Professions Council'. Such statements imply an automatic link between completing the programme successfully and registration with the HPC which is misleading. Successful completion of an approved programme confers eligibility to apply for registration with the HPC. Within the student handbook it is also stated that the programme is 'a qualification regulated by the Health Professions Council' this is incorrect as the HPC approves programmes, but regulates professions. The visitors also noted that in some instances the online advertising material and programme documentation refers to HPC Registration or standards as applying to 'Hearing aid audiologists', this is misleading as HPC registration and the HPC standards relate to the protected title of hearing aid dispensers that the HPC regulates. The visitors also noticed within the student handbook a statement that 'this foundation degree programme follows the framework laid down by the HPC in order to achieve registration in all the required professional standards of proficiency'. This statement is misleading as the HPC does not provide a framework as such but programmes must meet all the HPC's standards of education and training which in turn will ensure that students who successfully complete an approved programme can meet all the HPC's standards of proficiency. This does not automatically guarantee entry onto the HPC Register as a hearing aid dispenser. The visitors require the education provider to review and resubmit the programme documentation, including any advertising materials, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for applicants and students.

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

**Condition:** The programme team must put in place formal mechanisms which ensure that all practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

**Reason:** Documentation submitted prior to the visit did not include any mechanism of how the programme team ensured that all their placements had the relevant safety policies and procedures in place. There was no evidence of any risk assessments undertaken or how health and safety policies and procedures are monitored at placement settings. During discussions with the

programme team the visitors noted that students were already employed as a requirement for admission to this programme and that once they were accepted on the programme their employment became their placement, however there was currently no system in place to check that placements were safe and supportive before a student began their placement. The programme team currently uses the requirement that all supervisors must be HPC registered as assurance that this standard is being met, since to maintain registration hearing aid dispensers must continue to meet all the HPC standards of proficiency which are necessary for safe and effective practice. The visitors were concerned that this method was not rigorous enough for the programme team to use exclusively to ensure that placement environments are safe and supportive for students. As the programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including ensuring the placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment the visitors require the programme team to provide further evidence of how they will ensure all placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment. The visitors suggest the condition for SETs 5.4 be looked at alongside this condition as they are closely linked.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must put in place an effective system for approving and monitoring all practice placements.

**Reason:** Documentation submitted prior to the visit did not include any evidence of how the programme team approved and monitored all their placements. During discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that students were already employed as a requirement for admission to this programme and that once they were accepted on the programme their employment became their placement. The visitors learnt that currently placements were approved subject to the supervisors having the relevant HPC registration as a hearing aid dispenser. The programme team currently uses the requirement that all supervisors must be HPC registered as assurance that this standard is being met, since to maintain registration hearing aid dispensers must continue to meet all the HPC standards of proficiency which are necessary for safe and effective practice. The visitors were concerned that this method was not rigorous enough for the programme team to use exclusively to approve and monitor placements. They were also concerned that any issues with placement sites would only be flagged up by students after they had started their placement. As the programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including approving and monitoring placements the visitors require the programme team to provide further evidence of how they will ensure all placement settings are approved and monitored.

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

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

**Reason:** The visitors noted that students were already employed as a requirement for admission to this programme and that once they were accepted on the programme their employment became their placement. From the discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt that practice placement educator training was not mandatory and as such there was a low take up for training. The visitors learnt that the programme team currently uses HPC registration as an assurance that this standard is being met and that placement educators are appropriately qualified and experienced to supervise students. The visitors were concerned that HPC registration alone did not guarantee or provide placement educators with enough training to supervise students on this programme. They were concerned that without some form of mandatory training of new placement educators there was no way for the programme team to be assured that educators were suitably equipped to take on students and prepared to deliver formative and summative assessments. As this standard requires that the programme team trains all new practice placement educators and follows this up with regular refresher training the visitors require that the programme team ensures that all placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training before receiving students. The visitors therefore require evidence on the training that will be provided to practice placement educators and how this will be record and monitored.

Recommendations

**3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing the resources levels for the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors were content that this standard was met. However if the programme recruits further numbers on the proposed HND programme, the visitors would like the education provider to consider reviewing the number of relevant equipment, such as audiometers numbers, for the programme to ensure there continues to be an adequate number of resources to support student learning and that all students can benefit from this without constraints upon their onsite learning.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing the Student Consent Form to further emphasise that students have the right to opt out of practical and clinical teaching where participating as service users.

**Reason:** From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted that the education provider has a student consent form that it uses to obtain consent where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching. The visitors are therefore satisfied that this standard has been met. Through discussions the visitors noted good practice in that the programme team introduce this form as part of the programme induction and verbally discuss the fact that students may be able to opt out of practical and clinical teaching sessions should they, for example, have specific cultural or health requirements. However, to enhance this good practice the visitors would like to recommend that the education provider consider adding this information to the student consent form to formally emphasise that students have the right to opt out of practical and clinical teaching where participating as service users.

**5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.**

**Recommendation:** The programme team should consider keeping the collaborative arrangements between themselves and the practice placement providers under review to ensure that the collaboration continues effectively.

**Reason:** Through discussions with the programme team and placement providers the visitors noted that there was collaboration taking place between the education provider and the practice placement provider. As such they are content that this standard has been met. To ensure that collaboration continues and encompasses any new placement providers that could develop when the new

HND programme begins, the visitors suggest that the programme team monitor the collaboration between them and their placement providers to ensure that it continues and remains effective.

Hugh Crawford
Richard Sykes