hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Hertfordshire
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	17 - 18 May 2012

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 'Practitioner psychologist'or 'Clinical psychologist' 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 11 October 2012. At the Committee meeting on 11 October 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 practitioner psychologist profession came onto the register in July 2009 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 part of a joint event as the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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 professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Annie Mitchell (Clinical psychologist) Julie Harrower (Forensic psychologist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Victoria Adenugba
Proposed student numbers	17
First approved intake	January 2000
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Keith Pinn (University of Hertfordshire)
Secretary	Nicola Bates (University of Hertfordshire) Wendy Figgs (University of Hertfordshire)
Members of the joint panel	Andrew Vidgen (British Psychological Society) Eve Knight (British Psychological Society) Jan Burns (British Psychological Society) Molly Ross (British Psychological Society)

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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 SETs.

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

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

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

Conditions

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the fitness to practice policies are clearly articulated within the supervisor and trainee handbooks.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted that the education provder's fitness to practice policy was not included within the trainee or supervisor handbooks. In discussion with the programme team it was made clear that there are two processes in place which deal with concerns about students' profession-related conduct at placement as well as at the education provider's site. The visitors were provided with both the education provider's and the NHS trust's fitness to practice policies. However the visitors were subsequently unclear about how the education provider's procedure to deal with concerns about students' profession-related conduct worked in relation to the NHS trust policy and how students and supervisors are made aware of this. The visitors therefore require the trainee and supervisors' handbooks be updated to detail the process in place which deals with concerns about students' profession-related conduct, to include clarification on the connection between the NHS trust policy and the education provider's policy.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the curriculum ensures that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt that currently trainees are taught about the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics during their third year. The programme team also mentioned that this would now be taught during the first year. From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted references to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics publication within the student handbook. However they were unable to find evidence to outline where HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics were referred to in the curriculum and how the education provider ensures that students understand these standards, including how and where they apply. The visitors therefore require additional evidence to identify how the programme team ensure that students on the programme understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics before they embark on their first placement.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team look at how they communicate their accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APEL) policy.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met as APEL is not considered on this programme and this is stated within the programme handbook. The visitors would like the education provider to consider making this information known at the point of application; therefore the visitors suggest that this information should also be presented within the education provider's clearing house website.

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 visitors suggest the programme team look at how they ensure that classrooms are big enough for teaching, including space for break out rooms.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt that the current rooms used by the programme would be involved in the centralised booking system for rooms across the education provider's site. The visitors are happy this standard is met as the current rooms have enough space to accommodate the number of trainees on this programme and trainees do not spend all their time within the education provider's site. The visitors would like the programme team to consider their timetable in advance to make sure that room bookings are made in a timely manner and take into account classroom size and the need for break out rooms for trainees for small group work during teaching .

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

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team explore more ways of incorporating shared learning with other pre-qualification professionals.

Reason: During discussions with the trainees and programme team the visitors learnt that whilst currently there are no shared learning components in the programme, at placements trainees usually work as part of a multi-disciplinary team. The visitors suggest the programme team to explore more ways of incorporating shared learning to further enhance trainee's knowledge and understanding of the roles and expectations of other professionals health and social care provision.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team design a strategy to enable more active engagement with service users.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt that there currently was no budget within this programme for service users. Despite the lack of budget they learnt that the programme team wanted to increase the use of service users within this programme. During discussions with trainees the visitors learnt that they have had a few service users participate in their learning and that this was greatly appreciated. The visitors also learnt that trainees had been asked to develop a service user database. To enhance trainee's learning about the rights and needs of service users the visitors suggest that the programme team find ways of increasing their participation within the programme.

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team consider further strengthening of their relationship with their external examiners and monitoring of their report response times.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met. However during a review of the documentation submitted prior to the visit the visitors noticed that there had been a delayed response to an external examiner concerns. During discussion with the team the visitors learnt that the delay in response was due to the nature of the concern which the team wanted to respond to appropriately. The visitors learnt that the concern had now been addressed and the relationship between the team and external examiner restored. To ensure that future relations between the programme team and external examiners remain strong and effective the visitors suggest that the programme team continue to work with the external examiners and respond to their reports in a timely manner.

<div align="right">Annie Mitchell
Julie Harrower</div>