

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Manchester
Programme name	Masters in Speech and Language Therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Speech and language therapist
Date of visit	9 – 10 March 2017

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'speech and language therapist' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care 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 25 May 2017. At the Committee meeting on 25 May 2017, 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 HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC 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 an HCPC only visit. At the visit, the education provider did not validate or review the programmes, and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The professional body undertook a paper based exercise to review the programme, and the report from this exercise was made available to the visitors. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy programme run by the education provider, which is completed by all students undertaking this Masters programme, making it an 'Integrated Masters'. A separate visitor report exists for the BSc (Hons) programme.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Elsbeth McCartney (Speech and language therapist) Caroline Sykes (Speech and language therapist) Kathleen Taylor (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Jamie Hunt
Proposed maximum student numbers	42 per cohort, 1 cohort per year, with up to 42 continuing onto the Integrated Masters fourth year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2017
Chair	Shaun Speed (University of Manchester)
Secretary	Wayne Bulbrook (University of Manchester)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC 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"/>

The visitors considered external examiners reports for the BSc (Hons) programme only, as the Integrated Masters has not yet run.

During the visit the HCPC 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"/>
Service users and carers	<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 HCPC met with students from the existing BSc (Hons) programme, as the Integrated Masters programme currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be satisfied 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 the relevant 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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining five SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. 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 two recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally 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 update their programme and advertising documentation to ensure that information available to prospective and current students about personal and professional liability is accurate.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that the information available for students about personal and professional indemnity could be misleading. In the student clinical handbook (page 16), the education provider notes that “[p]ersonal injury to students is not covered by the university’s policy”, unless the placement provider was “negligent”, and suggests that students take out “personal accident cover”. This document also suggests that students become student members of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) who provide “professional indemnity insurance [for students] when on placement.” Both statements could be misleading to students, as they will likely be covered by vicarious (in the employer setting, or when under direct supervision of a registered speech and language therapist) and public liability insurance, and therefore will not need to take out any other liability cover in most circumstances. Particularly, the statement about RCSLT cover suggests that without student membership, students will not be covered. The visitors therefore require the education provider to check the accuracy of these statements in light of vicarious and public liability cover, and update their documentation as required.

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 obtain consent from students when they participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: From reviewing the SETs mapping completed by the education provider, the visitors noted that this standard was marked as “NA”. However, from conversations at the visit, the visitors noted that students do participate in role play sessions when undertaking the programme, and that therefore this standard does apply. Students noted that they had not given their consent to participate in these sessions, but considered them mandatory parts of the programme, and were happy to undertake them. However, the visitors noted that the education provider must have a protocol to obtain consent from students undertaking these sessions, to mitigate against any risks to the students or for the education provider, and ultimately to ensure this standard is met. Therefore the education provider must ensure that there is a protocol in place to obtain consent from students who undertake role play sessions.

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 education provider must demonstrate how the level of attendance required for practice placements is appropriate, and update their programme documentation so it accurately reflects this requirement.

Reason: From the documentation, the visitors noted that there is a 100 per cent attendance requirement for practice placements. However, from discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that there is some tolerance in this requirement for a certain level of unavoidable absence. However, the visitors were unclear what constitutes an acceptable level of absence, why this level is acceptable, and therefore how the education provider ensures that students undertake an appropriate amount of practice placements. The visitors were also unclear how staff and students are made aware of this (currently informal) policy, as this is not reflected in the programme documentation, and are therefore unclear how it is consistently applied. Therefore, the visitors require that the education provider defines what level of absence is acceptable, demonstrates why this is the case, and documents this policy so it can be accessed by staff that will be applying it, and students on the programme.

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 update their documentation to ensure that they are able to provide an alternative non-qualifying award should prohibitive professional issues be identified during the Integrated Masters year.

Reason: From conversations with the programme team, the visitors noted that if there were issues identified during the Integrated Masters (IM) part of the programme that impacted on an individual's fitness to practise, that individual would not receive an award that would allow them to apply for registration with the HCPC. This was the case even though all students undertaking the IM must have completed all components of an approved programme (the BSc (Hons)), in order to progress to this further level of study, although they would not be given this qualification before progressing to the IM. However, the visitors noted that there is a statement in the programme handbook (page 21) that "[a] student on the MSLT pathway who is in their fourth and final year but unable to progress to the award of Masters Speech and Language Therapy, may exit with the BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy as the clinical award with eligibility to apply to the HCPC for registration to practice, as they will have already achieved this by the end of their third year." The visitors noted that this statement does not explicitly assert that the education provider will not give this award should an issue occur during the IM year that would impede a student's fitness to practice as a speech and language therapist. Therefore, the education provider should update this document, along with any other relevant documentation, to reflect their intention in this area.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the programme documentation clearly defines options for alternative assessment should service users not give consent to be filmed as part of assessment on placement.

Reason: At the approval visit, the students told the visitors that they would fail a practice placement and need to retake it, if they were unable to have an assessment with a service user filmed. The programme team told the visitors that this was not the case, and that if no service user consented to being filmed, other arrangements would be made to assess the student. The visitors were satisfied with these arrangements from their discussions. However, on reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted (from page 10 of the Student Clinical Handbook) that there is an "Automatic fail if no

video is submitted”, and that “If [the placement is] failed [students] will need either a re-sit placement and a new clinical presentation examination or a re-sit of the original presentation without a re-sit placement”. The visitors were not clear in which circumstances a repeat of placement would be required, and considered that this information could be interpreted by staff and students in different ways. Therefore, the visitors require that the education provider updates their documentation to ensure clarity about what would happen if students were unable to have an assessment with a service user filmed.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should inform the HCPC their planned recruitment changes, or if staffing levels are reduced in the future.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, and from conversations with the senior team, the visitors noted that the current number of staff (including 2.0 FTE vacancies) is appropriate to support the delivery of the programme, and therefore that this standard is met. The visitors noted that the education provider is currently recruiting for one of the FTE vacancies, and that they had plans to recruit either another FTE or 1.4 FTEs in the future. Although the staff numbers and profile is currently appropriate to support the delivery of the programme, the visitors note that there is a risk to the second FTE (or 1.4 FTE) role not being recruited to, and therefore the staff numbers and profile could not be appropriate in the longer term. Therefore, the visitors recommend that the education provider inform the HCPC of any changes to their planned recruitment, or to the numbers of programme staff more broadly.

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue their work to ensure resources in the programme's resource room are always available to students.

Reason: On the facilities tour, the visitors were shown the programme's resource room, and were told that these resources should always be available as they should not be removed from the room. However, they were also told by staff and students, that there are sometimes issues with resources being taken and not returned. This has resulted in some students not being able to access certain resources at certain times. The education provider has attempted to manage this issue, by:

- making the room only accessible by a code given to their SLT students;
- employing a student to stocktake and manage a list of missing resources; and
- putting up signage that notes resources should not be removed.

The visitors were satisfied that resources in this room were appropriate to the curriculum and were usually available for students as required. They also noted that the education provider is working to reduce the impact of this issue on students, and are therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors note that in addition to the potential issue with students not being able to access specific resources, there is also a risk of inappropriate use of the resources by students in unsupervised settings. Therefore the education provider should continue its work in this area to ensure that all resources are readily available to students, and to mitigate the risk of these resources being used inappropriately.

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