

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Nottingham
Programme name	Master of Nutrition
Mode of delivery	Full time accelerated
Relevant part of HPC register	Dietetics
Date of visit	20 and 21 February 2008

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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 13 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Dietitian' or 'Dietician' 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 on 3 July 2008. At the Education and Training Committee's meeting on 3 July 2008, 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 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. The visit also considered a different programme, Master in Nutrition full time. A separate visitor report exists for this programme.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Mrs Alison Nicholls (Dietitian) Mrs Sylvia Butson (Dietitian)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Mrs Tracey Samuel-Smith
HPC observer	Ms Elisa Simeoni
Proposed student numbers	6
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2008
Chair	Dr Derek Chambers (University of Nottingham)
Secretary	Ms Nuala Carr (University of Nottingham) and Dr Fiona McCullough (University of Nottingham)

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"/>
School of Biosciences resource documentation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment rules and regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review complete module descriptions or practice placement handbooks prior to the visit as the education provider did not submit full information. However, they did table this information at the visit.

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports specifically for the Master of Nutrition full time accelerated programme prior to the visit 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"/>
Placement 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 (e.g. specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 56 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining seven 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 recommendation 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 have also made a commendation. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

2.1 The admission procedures must give both applicant and the education provider the information they require to make, or take up a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the Master of Nutrition entry in the prospectus to clearly state there are two programmes leading to the award of Master of Nutrition - the Master of Nutrition full time and Master of Nutrition full time accelerated.

Reason: The prospectus does not clearly state there are two programmes leading to the award of Master of Nutrition. The visitors felt that to provide applicants with full and clear information about which programme is more suitable for them, the entry in the prospectus must be amended.

2.2.1 The admission procedures must apply selection criteria, including evidence of a good command of written and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the advertising material, including the Master of Nutrition prospectus entry, to include information about the English language entry requirements.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team it became clear that through the education provider's interview process any English language difficulties would be identified and, if the applicant was offered a place on the programme, appropriate measures would be put in place. However, there is currently no information in the advertising material which informs applicants of the English language entry requirements. The visitors felt in order to provide applicants with full and clear information prior to taking up a place on a programme, the advertising material must be updated.

2.2.2 The admission procedures must apply selection criteria, including criminal conviction checks.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the advertising material, including the Master of Nutrition prospectus entry, to state that the CRB check is enhanced.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team, it became apparent the education provider undertakes enhanced CRB checks on applicants however this is not communicated in the advertising material. The visitors felt that to provide applicants with full and clear information prior to taking up a place on a programme, the advertising material must be updated.

3.9 Where students participate as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the student consent protocol to reflect the level and timings of student involvement throughout the course of the programme.

Reason: The HPC Panel was provided with a copy of the student consent form prior to the visit and during the programme team meeting they learnt that students were provided with this form at the start of the programme. The visitors were concerned that students were liable to forget the implications of signing this form. The visitors felt that to ensure students were aware of the extent and when they are expected to get involved in the programme; the student consent protocol must be redrafted.

5.4 Learning, teaching and supervision must be designed to encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation to include reference to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team and placement providers, it became apparent that students are taught about the behaviour expected of them on their placement and that their placements help prepare them for entry to the profession. However, the visitors could find no reference to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics in the documentation and in order to direct students to the standards HPC expects of them once they have joined the profession, the visitors felt the standards must be referenced.

5.7 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the following:

5.7.3 expectations of professional conduct;

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation to include reference to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team and placement providers, it became apparent that students are taught about the behaviour expected of them on their placement and that their placements help prepare them for entry to the profession. However, the visitors could find no reference to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics in the documentation and in order to direct students to the standards HPC expects of them once they have joined the profession, the visitors felt the standards must be referenced.

6.7.3 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the programme assessment regulations to clearly state that students who are awarded an aegrotat award are not eligible for admission to the HPC Register.

Reason: The assessment regulations received prior to the visit do not state that students who are awarded an aegrotat degree are not eligible to apply for registration. The visitors felt that to ensure the assessment regulations clearly specify eligibility for admission, amended documentation must be submitted.

Recommendations

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider a review of the programme documentation to reflect the latest terminology and include the most recent literature produced by the profession.

Reason: The visitors felt that the programme reflects the curriculum guidance of the profession and therefore meets this standard. However, the visitors thought that the 2002 British Dietetic Association leaflet provided in the student information pack and the terminology used in the programme specification, could be updated.

Commendations

The visitors wish to commend the following aspects of the programme,

Commendation: The visitors commended the education provider on the range of modules available to students as part of the optional elements of the programme.

Reason: During discussions with the programme team it was identified that the optional modules, which occur in Part 3 (direct entry), do not need to be undertaken within the School of Biosciences. The programme team highlighted that while most students were undertaking optional modules within the School, some students had opted to take modules in marketing and languages. The visitors felt that the design of the programme which allows students to undertake optional modules from other parts of the university, while not affecting the attainment of the standards of proficiency, was an area of best practice.

Mrs Alison Nicholls
Mrs Sylvia Butson