

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Plymouth
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of delivery	Part Time
Relevant part of HPC register	Occupational Therapy
Date of visit	8 – 10 April 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 'Occupational Therapist' 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 on 18 August 2008. At the Education and Training Committee's meeting on 18 August 2008, the ongoing approval of the programme was reconfirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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 part of a joint event. The education provider reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy and BSc (Hons) Podiatry. The education provider, 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Jennifer Caldwell (Occupational Therapist) Anthony Power (Physiotherapist) Jacqueline Waterfield (Physiotherapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Osama Ammar
Proposed student numbers	60
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2008
Chair	Chris Sturley (University of Plymouth)
Secretary	Maryann White (University of Plymouth)
Members of the joint panel	Remy Reyes (College of Occupational Therapy) Ruth Heames (College of Occupational Therapy) Patricia McClure (College of Occupational Therapy)

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"/>
Online access to relevant policies and documents	<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 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 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 59 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.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. 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 an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation for the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy programme to remove references to state registration of Occupational Therapists.

Reason: Within the submitted documentation there are indications of state registration (page 84 of the student handbook). In order to present accurately the independence of the HPC in its role as a regulator, the visitors felt the programme documentation required review and amendment.

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

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation to provide clarity of the planned staff numbers and their proposed input into the programme.

Reason: From the submitted documentation and discussions with the programme team, students and senior team, it was apparent that the programme resources including staff have been subject to change. In discussions it was apparent that the relocation of the programme as well as overall reduction in staff numbers as a result of long term leave arrangements require additional clarification in the document. In order for the visitors to be able to understand how the number of staff is adequate to deliver the programme, it was felt the programme documentation must clarify which members of the programme team are currently delivering the programme.

3.7 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be used effectively.

Condition: The education provider must provide documentation to confirm the arrangements for the relocation of resources to Plymouth in time for the start of the academic year 2008-2009.

Reason: From the submitted documentation and discussions with the senior team, programme team and students, it was clear the programme was currently in a transitional phase of a relocation from Exeter to Plymouth. By the start of academic year 2008-2009 it was intended to be delivering the programme solely at the Plymouth site. In order to ensure resources are available to support student learning, the visitors felt documentation was required to describe the relocation process and to provide confirmation that resources will be in place in time for the start of the academic year.

5.7.5 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate the lines of communication and responsibility regarding placements.

Reason: From the discussion with students and practice communicators, it was apparent that the recent changes to the placement co-ordination / supervision model in relation the Practice Development Teams had not been effectively communicated. To ensure that practice educators and students fully understand what to do and who to contact when they require support, the visitors felt the documentation must be amended to provide clarity on the responsibilities of individuals.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider increasing the regularity of obtaining consent from students on the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that a protocol for obtaining consent was in place at the start of the programme. However, the visitors recommended that consent should be obtained at the commencement of each year to ensure that students gave consent based on more current information.

5.10 The education provider must ensure necessary information is supplied to practice placement providers.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revisiting the communication to all parties surrounding the role of the Practice Development Teams.

Reason: From discussion with the senior management team, programme team, placement providers and students, it was clear that there have been some changes to the placement co-ordination /supervision relatively recently. Whilst the visitors recognise the benefit and value of these changes to the programmes of study on which they impact, it was apparent that the various parties involved in the changes had differing levels of awareness. In order to improve understanding of the role of the Practice Development Teams, the visitors recommend that the communication strategy to this work is revisited.

Jennifer Caldwell
Anthony Power
Jacqueline Waterfield