

Visitors' report

|                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Name of education provider</b>    | University of Southampton |
| <b>Programme name</b>                | BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy  |
| <b>Mode of delivery</b>              | Full time<br>Part time    |
| <b>Relevant part of HPC Register</b> | Physiotherapist           |
| <b>Date of visit</b>                 | 27 – 29 May 2009          |

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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 'Physiotherapist' or 'Physical 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 (Committee) on 22 September 2009. At the Committee meeting on 22 September 2009, 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions standards, programme management and resources standards, curriculum standards, practice placements standards and assessment standards. The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that 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 validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration), Pg Dip Physiotherapy (Pre-registration), BSc (Hons) Podiatry, MSc Podiatry (Pre-registration), Pg Dip Podiatry (Pre-registration), BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration) and Pg Dip Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration). 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                     | Margaret Curr (Physiotherapist)<br>Katie Bosworth (Physiotherapist)  |
| HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)                | Brendon Edmonds  |
| Proposed student numbers                                | 70 (BSc & MSc)   |
| Proposed start date of programme approval               | September 2009   |
| Initial approval  | 02 January 1999  |
| Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from | September 2009   |
| Chair   | Rosalynd Jowett (University of Southampton)  |
| Secretary   | Sara Dixon (University of Southampton)   |
| Members of the joint panel                              | Nick Maguire (University of Southampton)<br>Tom Randell (University of Southampton)<br>Carolyn Blundell (University of |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Southampton)<br>Susan Richardson (Chartered<br>Society of Physiotherapy)<br>Nina Thomson (Chartered Society of<br>Physiotherapy) |
|--|--|

## 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"/> |

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 (eg 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 57 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 6 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 programme documentation and advertising materials to follow the guidance provided in the HPC 'Regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers'.

**Reason:** From the documentation submitted it was clear that the programme documentation and advertising materials for the programme did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. Currently there is reference to the term 'licence to practice' in several documents. This term does not reflect the independence of the HPC or its role as a regulatory body which functions by protecting professional titles. Therefore, in order to provide applicants with the correct information to make an informed choice about whether to join the programme, the visitors felt the text used in programme documentation and advertising must be amended.

### **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 programme documentation to clearly state the relationship between graduating from the programme and eligibility to apply to the HPC Register.

**Reason:** From the documentation submitted it was clear that the advertising materials for the programme did not fully comply with the advertising guidelines issued by HPC. Specifically, the advertising materials stated that graduates were eligible to register with the HPC. The visitors felt this implied that upon successful completion of the programme graduates could automatically gain registration with the HPC; which is not the case. To enable applicants to make an informed choice about the programme, the visitors' felt the advertising materials must be updated to show that successful completion of an approved programme leads to 'eligibility to apply for registration with the HPC'.

### **3.2 The programme must be managed effectively.**

**Condition:** The education provider must clarify the systems used to ensure that placement components of the programme are managed effectively.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation and through discussions with the programme team and practice placement educators that there were systems in place to manage placements. In particular, a new audit tool was currently being piloted and due to be implemented across all programmes in the school. However, the programme documentation did not

include an example of the audit tool and further documentation detailing how this tool is used to manage placements.

The visitors require further evidence of the audit tool and how this tool and the associated systems in place ensure that the approval, monitoring and assessment of placements and the training of practice educators are managed effectively. Furthermore, the visitors require specific evidence addressing the feedback mechanisms in place for placements including how feedback is collated from various sources, addressed and then fed back into the development of the placement experience.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further documentation detailing the planned staff numbers and each staff members proposed input into the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation that the external examiner and students had commented on the staffing levels in place to deliver the programme. In particular, it was noted that practical sessions delivered throughout the programme were, at times, crowded with high student to staff levels. The visitors also noted in meeting with the programme team, that the issue of staffing levels was being addressed and that it was indicated that the school had adequate resources in place to deliver any current and future programmes.

The visitors require further evidence to be satisfied that there is an adequate number of staff in place to deliver the programme. The visitors require detailed evidence which addresses each staff member and their individual responsibilities across the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy and MSc/Pg Dip Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) programmes and any other award pathways.. The documentation addressing this condition should also include any research/extra-curricular commitments which would have a direct impact on the ability of staff to deliver the programme.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence that a thorough and effective system is in place for the approving and monitoring of all placements.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation and through meetings with the programme team and practice placement providers that the school was piloting the use of a new audit tool. However, the programme documentation did not include an example of the audit tool and further documentation detailing how this tool is used to approve and monitor placements.



The visitors require further evidence of the audit tool and the associated systems in place to be satisfied there is a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring placements. Furthermore, the visitors require specific evidence addressing the feedback mechanisms for placements including how feedback is collated from various sources, addressed and then fed back into the development of the placement experience.

#### **6.4 The measurement of student performance and progression must be an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation, and use objective criteria.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the assessment criteria that is applied to each level of the programme.

**Reason:** The programme documentation supplied prior to and at the visit itself, addressed assessment criteria for specific modules and pieces of assessment. The visitors were satisfied that specific assessment criteria applied throughout the programme was appropriate to their respective modules and pieces of assessment.

However, the visitors were not satisfied that students were provided with clear assessment criteria outlining how they were assessed at each level of the programme.

The visitors require further evidence of the assessment criteria governing how students are assessed at each level of the programme. In particular, the visitors would expect to see how the assessment criteria applied within each module is consistent with the assessment criteria pertaining to each level of the programme. Furthermore, they would also expect to see how the assessment criteria reflects and impacts on the overall progression of a student to be satisfied that the measurement of student progression is an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation.

##### **6.7.1 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the assessment criteria that is applied to each level of the programme

**Reason:** The programme documentation supplied prior to and at the visit itself, addressed assessment criteria for specific modules and pieces of assessment. The visitors were satisfied that specific assessment criteria applied throughout the programme was appropriate to their respective modules and pieces of assessment.

However, the visitors were not satisfied that students were provided with clear assessment criteria outlining how they were assessed at each level of the programme.

The visitors require further evidence of the assessment criteria governing how students are assessed at each level of the programme. In particular, the visitors would expect to see how the assessment criteria applied within each module is consistent with the assessment criteria pertaining to each level of the programme. Furthermore, they would also expect to see how the assessment criteria reflects and impacts on the overall progression of a student to be satisfied that the measurement of student progression is an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation.

## Recommendations

### **3.10 A system of academic and pastoral student support must be in place.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider monitoring the future resource provisions for one to one academic and pastoral support.

**Reason:** The visitors noted whilst touring the facilities that the programme team will be using an open plan workspace in the near future. The open plan workspace will require students to book time in advance in order to meet one on one with members of the team. This requirement is in place to ensure rooms are available at the requested meeting time to provide privacy.

Although the visitors are satisfied that this SET has been met, they recommend these proposed arrangements are carefully monitored to ensure an appropriate level of academic and pastoral support continues to be provided to students.

### **3.12 The resources provided, both on and off site, must adequately support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing the resources available within placements to accommodate the facilitation of interprofessional learning.

**Reason:** The visitors noted from meeting with placement educators that the resources required to facilitate a group of interprofessional students on placement were often difficult to access or provide. In particular, the lack of additional meeting space available within most placements meant that facilitating a large group of students, who were working towards common pieces of assessment, was challenging. Furthermore, the time restraints placed on placement educators, due to the nature of interprofessional learning and the need to facilitate group dynamics, also proved challenging to manage.

The visitors were satisfied that this SET was met, however recommend a review of interprofessional learning within placements to ensure the prescribed assessment tasks are appropriate to the resources available within particular placement settings.

### **4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the Standards of Proficiency for their part of the Register.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider reviewing the learning outcomes across all modules within the programme to further ensure that they are indicative of the actual learning outcomes for students.

**Reason:** The visitors noted the learning outcomes listed across all modules were generic and it was not clear how they specifically aligned with the skills assessments. The programme team addressed this issue and advised that the

learning outcomes were designed to be as flexible as possible in order to allow innovation in teaching and assessment.

The visitors were satisfied that the SET had been met, however recommend that the programme team review the learning outcomes across all modules within the programme to further ensure that they are indicative of the actual learning outcomes for students.

**5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider continuing its efforts to expand the range of placements on offer to placements outside of a traditional NHS setting.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation and through the meeting with the programme team there had been a systematic approach adopted by the School to pursue the provision of placements experiences outside those traditionally supplied in NHS settings.

The visitors acknowledge the work already done in this area and recommend the programme team continue to pursue non-traditional placement settings to provide students with a greater range of placement experiences.

**5.13 The placement providers must have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to students, together with an indication of how this will be implemented and monitored.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider monitoring non-traditional placements to further ensure they have equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policies in place.

**Reason:** As mentioned above in the recommendation for SET 5.5, the visitors noted the work carried out by the programme team in securing a greater range of placements in non-traditional settings.

The visitors recommend the programme team continue to monitor the acquisition of further non-traditional placements to further ensure these placement providers have equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored

Margaret Curr  
Katie Bosworth