hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	19 – 21 May 2010

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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 15 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 (Committee) on 26 August 2010. At the Committee meeting on 26 August 2010, 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 management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. 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 reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Imaging, Graduate Diploma Diagnostic Imaging, BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology, Graduate Diploma Radiotherapy and Oncology, BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy and Graduate Diploma Physiotherapy.

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 Hanson (Occupational Therapist) Jane Grant (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	45 per cohort once a year across the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy and the Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy programmes
Initial approval	September 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Richard Eke (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Secretary	Wendy Hopkins (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Members of the joint panel	Carolyn Bromfield (Internal Panel Member)

	Heidi Von Kurthy (External Panel Member)
	Sally Feaver (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Michaela Higginson (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Clair Parkin (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Helen Millican (Internal Panel Member)

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	☒	☐	☐
Additional policy information	☒	☐	☐

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 52 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 5 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 have also made a commendation. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

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 resubmit all relevant instances in submitted programme documentation, including online information, to ensure that the terminology in use is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation and gives the accurate information about applying to the Register.

Reason: The documentation submitted provided contained instances of out-of-date terminology in reference to the registered status of individuals namely "licence to practice" (Contextual Documentation for Validation, Programme Specification, Response to Preliminary Scrutiny Report, Professional Practice Portfolio, Programme Handbook). The online information (as of 18 May 2010) was unclear as to the relationship between completion of the programme and registration in that it implies that registration is automatic upon completion. The visitors considered the terminology could be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require the documentation and online information to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out of date terminology.

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all relevant instances in programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that the English-language entry criteria are clear.

Reason: From a review of the documentation submitted it was not clear what the English-language requirements were on entry to the programme. It was also not apparent what International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level was applicable on entry to the programme. At the visit, discussions with the programme team indicated that this should be level 7 overall with no less than 6.5 for any area. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the programme documentation clearly states the English language requirements on entry to the programme, to ensure that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit a revised Practice Placement Portfolio that ensures references to HPC requirements are accurate.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit (Practice Placement Portfolio – Section 8) had a statement which stated "The Health Professions Council requires you to have completed 1000 hours of professional practice prior

to registering". The Health Professions Council does not make this a requirement to register and this therefore gives students incorrect information. The visitors therefore require the education provider submits programme specific documentation that does not make this statement for students in this important resource.

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 submit a revised programme handbook that clearly shows the consent procedures for students.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit had a consent form included in the appendices but not in the programme handbook. Other documentation stated that the consent form could be found in the programme handbook. Discussions with the students indicated they were not fully aware of having given their consent to participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching. After discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied the education provider had a consent protocol to use however in light of the above were not satisfied the consent protocols were communicated effectively to students. The visitors therefore require the education provider to resubmit a revised programme handbook which includes the education provider's consent form and associated processes to make the process and the implications more explicit and accessible for students.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that external examiners appointed to the programme must be HPC registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail in the external examiner recruitment policy. The visitors were happy with the external examiner arrangements for the programme after discussions with the programme team, but need to see evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revising the programme documentation to include references to the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics and guidance on conduct and ethics for students alongside references to professional body ethical standards and in relevant module reading lists

Reason: The programme documentation provided prior to the visit made no explicit reference to the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The professional body's Code of Ethics was heavily referenced throughout. The visitors were satisfied the programme's curriculum and documentation made sure students understood the implications of HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors recommend to further embed the standards within the learning, where references are made to the professional body's Code of Ethics, the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics and Guidance on conduct and ethics for students also be referenced, and included in relevant module reading lists.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the training they use for practice placement educators.

Reason: During the visit, discussions with the practice placement educators indicated they were not entirely satisfied with the training requirements as currently held by the education provider. It was discussed that the training requirements had recently changed to a new system which posed problems for practice placement educators with accessing the training and therefore utilising it fully. The visitors were satisfied this SET was met but recommend the education provider review the training they use to ensure practice placement educators are not alienated by the training currently offered or discouraged from offering student places to the programme.

Commendations

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

Commendation: The visitors wish to commend the 'Widening Occupation Weeks (WOW)' that the education provider holds in the first year.

Reason: The WOW initiative that has been brought into the programme allocates students as volunteers for two weeks in their first year onto local community projects. The visitors felt this experience underpinned the learning experience and enhanced the students understanding of the theoretical application of 'occupation' in the community with a shared experience of engaging in 'meaningful occupation'. They felt it was extremely beneficial for students to actively engage directly in the community in such a way and would give them opportunities to experience occupation in ways not provided directly through the programme which would increase their experience and confidence. The visitors felt this was indicative of best practice.

Jane Grant
Margaret Hanson