

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Ulster
Programme name	Postgraduate Certificate in Prescribing for Allied Health Professionals
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Chiropody/Podiatry Physiotherapy Radiography
Relevant entitlement(s)	Supplementary prescribing / Prescription Only Medicine
Date of visit	12 June 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. The HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

As well as approving educational programmes for people who want to join the Register, the HPC also approve a small number of programmes for those already on the Register. The post-registration programmes we currently approve are supplementary prescribing programmes (for chiropodists / podiatrists, radiographers and physiotherapists) and programmes in local anaesthetics and prescription-only medicine (for chiropodists / podiatrists).

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 November 2009. At the Committee meeting on 25 November 2009, 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 part of a joint event. The education provider validated the programme. The education provider 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 the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Emma Supple (Podiatrist) Bob Fellows (Paramedic)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Neil Strevett
Proposed student numbers	15
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2010
Chair	Bernie Hannigan (University of Ulster)
Secretary	Brian McArthur (University of Ulster)
Members of the joint panel	Bhanu Ramaswamy (External Panel Member) John Cathcart (External 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	<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"/>

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner 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"/>
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"/>

The HPC met with students from a number of programmes within the School of Health Sciences as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

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 60 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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 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 the 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 review any advertising materials for the programme to follow the guidance provided in the HPC “Regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers” and ensure that all applicants to the programme are made aware that all the conditions outlined below have to be met in full and the programme given approval by the HPC’s Education and Training Committee.

Reason: The visitors noted that programme had a proposed start date of September 2009. Though they also noted that the initial cohort of students would be recruited through commissioned places from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI), the visitors wanted the education provider to ensure that all advertising materials and documentation sent to applicants adhered to HPC protocols and it was made clear to applicants that all conditions will have to be met in full before HPC approval for the programme could be given.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider’s business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide confirmation that the agreement to commission places on the programme from the DHSSPSNI has been signed and that that the programme has a secure place in its business plan.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider detailed that they had been approached by the DHSSPSNI to develop the programme on the basis that the DHSSPSNI would initially commission 15 places per year on the programme for the first five years. The programme has been identified as a meeting a specific service need within Northern Ireland. The documentation also explained that though the DHSSPSNI would provide the primary driver for the programme, it was hoped to extend the programme to cover demand throughout the UK and All Ireland markets. In subsequent discussions with the senior management team, it was noted that local health trusts within Northern Ireland had students waiting to come onto the programme but no final agreement had been signed between the education provider and the DHSSPSNI at the time of the approval event. The visitors judged that in order to meet this standard, the education provider must provide confirmation that the agreement has been signed and that the programme has a secure place in the education provider’s business plan.

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 develop appropriate protocols and consent forms to be used when students on the programme participate as patients or clients in practical clinical teaching sessions.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that there could be occasions where the delivery of the programme would entail practical sessions with students participating as patients or clients. It was not anticipated that this would constitute a major part of the delivery of the programme, as the students recruited onto the programme would be registered health professionals working with actual patients in clinical settings and under the supervision of a designated medical practitioner. However, the documentation submitted by the education provider did not contain any consent forms or protocols governing potential student participation in practical teaching sessions. The visitors judged that in order to meet this standard, the education provider must develop protocols and consent forms for use when students on the programme participate in practical teaching sessions.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The visitors wish to recommend that additional staff within the School of Health Sciences undertake a supplementary prescribing qualification in order to offer the education provider a greater depth of teaching capacity for the programme.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, and following on from discussions with the programme team and senior team, the visitors noted that while there is currently an adequate number of staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver the programme and meet this standard, they wished to recommend to the education provider that it encourages as broad a number of staff as possible from the School of Health Sciences to gain a supplementary prescribing qualification in order to provide a greater depth of teaching capacity for the programme.

Emma Supple
Bob Fellows