

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Ulster
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology (formerly BSc (Hons) Radiography (Therapeutic))
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Radiographer
Relevant modality / domain	Therapeutic radiography
Date of visit	21 – 23 February 2012

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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 'Radiographer' or 'Therapeutic radiographer' 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 (Committee) on 5 July 2012. At the Committee meeting on 5 July 2012, 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards -programme management and resources, curriculum 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 validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging and BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy.

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	Stephen Boynes (Diagnostic Radiographer) Russell Hart (Therapeutic Radiographer)
HPC executive officers (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	16 per cohort
First approved intake	September 1991
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Denise McAlister (University of Ulster)
Secretary	Brian McArthur (University of Ulster)
Members of the joint panel	Lesley Forsyth (College of Radiographers) Sandra Shaw (College of Radiographers) Alison Wright (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"/>
Additional programme, faculty and education provider information collated for visit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as the programme is new therefore external examiners' reports do not exist. The HPC reviewed external examiners' reports from the last two years from the BSc (Hons) Radiography (Therapeutic) programme.

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 the BSc (Hons) Radiography (Therapeutic) programme as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

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 can be reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 49 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 8 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.

Conditions

3.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide information to indicate who will have overall professional responsibility for the programme and that this person will be agreed with the HPC.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were unable to determine who would have overall professional responsibility for the programme and therefore were unable to determine whether they would be appropriately qualified, experienced and supported in the role. It was clarified at the visit a person could not be officially appointed to the role until the programme had been approved through the education provider's approval processes. In order to ensure this standard is met the visitors require details of who is expected to be programme leader and confirmation that if this person is not appointed the programme team will notify the HPC of the programme leader through the major change process.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme specification document to ensure it contains complete and accurate information about the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme specification document there were incomplete areas of information. The programme specification document clearly specifies the final award confers eligibility to apply for HPC registration. The programme specification does not clearly state that exit awards do not lead to eligibility to apply for HPC registration (pB14). The visitors noted the programme specification document included a section on criteria for admission (B16). The admission requirements did not include any GSCE, GCE, A level or alternative qualification requirements for the programme. The visitors are aware there are qualifications required for entry to the programme.

The visitors considered the programme specification document to inform other programme documents and resources, including advertising materials, and so should have information in it to ensure correct information is passed on to these sources. From discussions during the visit the visitors also learnt that documentation submitted for this visit was still in draft form and was due to be finalised and approved by the education provider.

The visitors require the education provider to revise the programme specification document to clearly articulate exit award policies and admission requirements. The visitors also require the programme team to provide evidence of the final programme documentation after it has satisfied the requirements of the education provider.

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.

Condition: The education provider must submit any revised module descriptors for the programme or confirmation the previously submitted module descriptors are not subject to change prior to final programme approval by HPC.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the programme team may amend the module descriptors learning outcomes and assessments as part of the post visit process for the education provider. If any changes are to be made to the descriptors the visitors will need to review them to ensure changes will not adversely affect the learning outcomes or how the programme ensures students can meet the SOPs upon completion of the programme. The visitors require the education provider to resubmit the programme module descriptors if any changes are made, or confirm the previously submitted module descriptors are not subject to change, to ensure those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Reason: The education provider must revise module descriptors for the modules shared between the radiography programmes to ensure they articulate the therapeutic aspects of the teaching for this professional group.

Condition: Documentation and discussion indicated the programme takes part in shared learning alongside the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging programme. For several of the modules the visitors found the module descriptors and reading lists to be based on diagnostic radiography instead of therapeutic radiography. Through discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard the shared modules would have shared teaching but would incorporate the profession-specific skills and knowledge of both professional groups. The visitors considered clarity for the therapeutic radiography students to be important so they can fully understand the objectives of the shared modules from their profession perspective. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the module descriptors for the shared modules to ensure they clearly articulate the therapeutic aspects of the teaching for this professional group.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate they have overall responsibility for placements and maintain a formal process for initially approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: Discussion and documentation detailed the management of the placements for the programme. There is one centre which hosts students on placement; the centre holds monthly meetings with the programme team. These meetings are used to ensure the placement setting continues to be effective and appropriate for the students. Discussion at the visit indicated the education

provider had no formal documented process for the approval or monitoring of placements.

The visitors were concerned that, although there were systems in place to monitor the placement, the systems did not adhere to a formal process and so there was the potential for the programme team to not have a consistent approach to monitoring or enough of an input into the monitoring of placements. This could mean the programme team are not fully maintaining a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring placements. The visitors are aware currently there is only the one placement setting the programme works with however discussion indicated there was the possibility of expanding the range of placements to include a new centre that is being planned. With no formal processes for approving the placements before students are placed on placement the programme team cannot be sure the new placement settings are appropriate for students.

The visitors reviewed the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging programme at this event. The visitors noted this programme has a placement form and process which they use to approve and monitor placements. The visitors suggest the programme team look at how this other radiography programme's approval and monitoring processes work and adapt them for this programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence to demonstrate they have overall responsibility and can maintain a formal process for initially approving and monitoring all placements.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure placement educators are appropriately registered or how other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included information of how the education provider monitors the placements. The centre which hosts students on placement holds monthly meetings with the programme team. These meetings are used to ensure the placement settings continue to be effective and appropriate for the students. Discussion at the visit indicated the education provider has no formal documented process for the monitoring of placements.

The visitors were concerned that although there were systems in place to monitor the placement the systems did not adhere to a formal process and so there was the potential for the programme team to not have a consistent approach to monitoring or enough of an input into the monitoring of placements. This could mean the programme team are unable to ensure placement educators working with students are appropriately registered or from agreeing other arrangements.

The programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including ensuring the students are working with a placement educator who is appropriately registered or agreeing other arrangements if this is not the case. The condition for SET 5.4 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are linked; ensuring placement educators' registration status is often included in approval and monitoring processes. The visitors require the education provider to

submit further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure placement educators are appropriately registered or how other arrangements are agreed.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must submit any revised module descriptors for the programme or confirmation the previously submitted module descriptors are not subject to change prior to final programme approval by HPC.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the programme team may amend the module descriptors learning outcomes and assessments as part of the post visit process for the education provider. If any changes are to be made to the descriptors the visitors will need to review them to ensure changes will not adversely affect the learning outcomes or the assessment of the learning outcomes. The visitors require the education provider to resubmit the programme module descriptors if any changes are made, or confirm the previously submitted module descriptors are not subject to change, to ensure those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

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 include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the register or that other arrangements will be agreed.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail regarding external examiner policies for the programme. The programme specification document (B18) did have a section for external examiner policies however there was no information regarding this particular standard. The visitors were satisfied with the arrangements currently in place for the existing programme however, to demonstrate this standard is met for this new programme, the visitors require documentary evidence to show recognition of HPC requirements for the external examiners.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider review programme documentation to ensure consistency across both radiography programmes.

Reason: The visitors were also reviewing the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging programme at this event. They noted the two programmes were very different however did have some aspects which were very similar in terms of education provider processes which applied to both and standard programme documentation. The visitors noted the documentation submitted did not appear to have been co-ordinated as much as it could have been. The visitors found sections which, when compared, were confusing. For example the programme specifications for both programmes include Criteria for Admission information. The BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology programme describes a “criminal convictions check” whereas the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging programme describes instead a “Pre-Employment Consultancy Check”. The visitors received a placement handbook for staff for the BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology programme which had the aims of the course including the aim “To produce competent, safe and proactive radiographers (diagnostic or therapeutic) with a professional qualification that confers eligibility for registration with the HPC” (p4). This document was provided for the therapeutic radiography programme however refers to the diagnostic programme. The BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging programme submitted a different Practice Educator’s Handbook as part of this submission. The visitors found the differences between the programmes’ documentation to be confusing, especially as they seemed to have similar aspects to them which could be co-ordinated for an event such as this one or for anyone using the documentation or reviewing the programme.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider consider implementing a formal forum to update practice educators about changes to the programme.

Reason: The programme documentation indicated the practice educators are appropriately trained to work with students from this programme. The visitors noted there is close communication with individual practice educators through mid-placement visits, through telephone/email communication and through committee meetings that both the programme team and the practice placements are members of. The visitors suggest a more formal forum (such as a training day or specific meeting) for updating practice educators about changes made to the programme would be a useful way of ensuring the same information is communicated to all practice educators. The visitors feel this would encourage consistency and parity across all placement settings.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider keep the assessment strategy for the programme under review.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied the assessments in the modules were appropriate to assess module learning outcomes. They noted in the modules overall there were assessments which were similar types but which were weighted at a different percentage of the overall mark and some which had similar percentage weightings but were different assessment types. The assessment strategy for the programme was discussed between the programme team and the visiting panel and it was indicated the assessment strategy was in line with education provider requirements however the visitors felt it could be confusing for students and for external reviewers of the programme. The visitors recommend the programme team keep the assessment strategy under review to ensure consistency in the types of assessments across modules.

Stephen Boynes
Russell Hart