HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Sheffield Hallam University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, PT (Part time)
	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy, PT (Part time)
Approval visit date	17 October 2018
Case reference	CAS-13211-R0T0H2

Contents

Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards
We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

How we make our decisions
We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Joanne Stead	Occupational therapist
Valerie Maehle	Physiotherapist
Frances Ashworth	Lay
John Archibald	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit
There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Dr Rebecca Hodgson	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Sheffield Hallam University
Linda Hall	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Sheffield Hallam University
Sam Moorwood	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Rebecca Peake	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Jo Daley	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Profession	Occupational therapist
Proposed First intake	01 March 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 15
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01930

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time. We were told of the establishment of this new Degree Apprenticeship programme through our major change process. This programme was established out of existing occupational therapy provision at the education provider.

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Profession	Physiotherapist
Proposed First intake	01 March 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 15
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01931

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time. We were told of the establishment of this new Degree Apprenticeship programme through our major change process. This programme was established out of existing physiotherapy provision at the education provider.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes

Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 20 December 2018.

2.1   The admissions process 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 ensure that appropriate, clear and consistent information is available to applicants and enables them to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: From their review of the programmes' documentation, the visitors considered that some of the information available to applicants was not clear or was not correct. For example, reference was made to the programmes giving "eligibility for professional registration" with the HCPC rather than graduates being "eligible to apply for registration". There were also references to the Health Professions Council rather than the Health and Care Professions Council. The visitors also noted the webpages for applicants to the programmes were not yet live. Therefore they were not able to determine whether the information provided on those pages was sufficient to enable

applicants to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. They therefore require the education provider to review all relevant materials to ensure accurate and complete information about both programmes is provided to applicants. This includes making the website available for the visitors to review.

2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must clarify the academic entry standards to the programme.

Reason: From their review of the programmes' documentation, the visitors were made aware that there may be an expectation amongst employers that the education provider will be flexible in their entry standards. This was to reflect the demographic for applicants being a mix of existing staff and school leavers, and some may have lower or less recent academic qualifications than others. In the meeting with the programme team at the visit, the visitors were informed there would not be flexibility in the entry standards and that the education provider would be looking for equivalency in regards to academic qualifications. The visitors consequently noted that the requirements were not clear and may result in applicants misunderstanding what the entry requirements are. The visitors therefore require the programme to clarify what the entry standards are, and that they will not go below the requirements of the education provider.

4.6 The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Condition: For the occupational therapy programme, the education provider must demonstrate what learning and teaching methods are used, and how these are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were made aware of the blended learning approach to learning and teaching while on campus, in the workplace and in practice-based learning. In the meeting to give an overview of provision, the visitors were made aware the learner would work with their mentor in the workplace to complete tasks as set during teaching. However, the visitors did not receive information on how the education provider is going to manage these work-based tasks in order to provide equity of learning opportunity for all learners. Therefore, in order to ensure this standard is met, the visitors require more information on what the work-based tasks are and how they will support delivery of the learning outcomes for the occupational therapy programme.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must clarify their attendance requirements around when learners are able to take leave.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were made aware all learners needed to attend all sessions of the programme. For practice-based learning, a 100% attendance was seen as the norm, but a minimum attendance of 80% was required. For occupational therapy learners, leave was to be negotiated during non-teaching weeks

and practice-based learning blocks. For physiotherapy learners, leave may only be taken during designated holiday periods. It was not possible to take leave during term-time. However, in the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed learners had to attend all sessions, unless the practice-based learning spanned Christmas holidays. The visitors were unable to see clearly whether learners were able to take leave, when they were able to do so and how much they were able to take. As there was discrepancy with the information provided, the visitors were not clear about the programme policy on attendance and therefore require the education provider to clarify their attendance policy.

6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: For the physiotherapy programme, the education provider must clarify what is required for progression within the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were aware that there were exemptions available for learners from normal progression within the programme. Retrieval of placement modules was allowed in the next year of study. At the visit, the visitors were made aware that as the programmes will run annually, learners are able to continue with a module if they miss one. However, the visitors did not see information regarding the number of credits needed for progression from one year to the next. The visitors therefore require evidence that shows what is expected of learners at each stage of the physiotherapy programme to ensure progression.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: For the physiotherapy programme, the education provider should consider strengthening how they ensure service users and carers are involved in the programme.

Reason: From their review of the documentation for the physiotherapy programme, the visitors were made aware service users and carers had been engaged in the co-production of the programme. The education provider had also run a consultation where service users and carers had been invited to critique the course design and structure, and provide feedback prior to the final submission of the development document. In the meeting with service users and carers, the visitors heard there had been involvement with interviewing applicants. As such, the visitors knew how and which service users are involved in the programme, that this involvement is appropriate, and were satisfied the standard had been met. However, the visitors noted that the level of service user and carer involvement could be strengthened throughout the entire programme to ensure meaningful and ongoing contribution. This could include looking at which parts of the programme are most appropriate for their involvement.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 30 January 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.