hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Staffordshire University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	25 – 26 January 2012

Contents

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 'Biomedical scientist' 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. The education provider has until 19 March 2012 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 10 May 2012. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 30 April 2012. The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Committee on the approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Committee on 5 July 2012.

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 as the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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 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 professional body outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Christine Murphy (Biomedical scientist) Phil Warren (Biomedical scientist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	6
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2012
Chair	Stephen Williams (Staffordshire University)
Secretary	Jackie Campbell (Staffordshire University)
Members of the joint panel	Carol Ainley (Institute of Biomedical Science) Alan Wainright (Institute of Biomedical Science) Graham Wilson (Institute of Biomedical Science)

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme and education provider information submitted for visit	☒	☐	☐

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 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 41 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 16 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.

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 revise their advertising materials to ensure the essential information and admission requirements for this programme are clearly articulated for potential applicants.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit described how students are first admitted onto the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme and then in their first year apply for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme. The advertising materials for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme are included within the advertising materials for the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme. The information is not primarily written for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme although it does contain some information about this programme.

During discussion the students indicated they had been aware of the competitive interviews needed for entry to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme however they were not aware of there being very limited places available for the programme and how competitive this made the application process.

The visitors also noted the advertising materials did not include information about the admissions procedures for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme in particular the requirements for criminal conviction checks, occupational health checks and evidencing a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

To give potential applicants all the information they require to make an informed decision about the programme, the education provider will need to ensure it clearly articulates the information stated above in the advertising materials. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider revise the advertising materials to ensure the essential information and admission requirements for this programme are clearly articulated for potential applicants.

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 provide evidence to demonstrate how their admissions procedures apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English. The education provider must also demonstrate how they ensure this information is made available for potential applicants.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the admissions procedures for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science did not include any English-language level requirements. In discussion with the programme team

they indicated they believed because this was a UK delivered programme, students graduating from this programme did not need to meet the standard of proficiency (SOP) 1b.3, which outlines English communication requirements for registrants. As a result they did not have any English level requirements in their admissions procedures for this programme. This information is incorrect in that all registrants will need to be able to meet SOP 1b.3 in order to register with the HPC and then continue to meet this SOP in order to maintain their registration status. This programme needs to ensure that upon successful completion graduates are able to meet SOP 1b.3.

The visitors also noted the advertising materials (in particular the website) did not include information about the English language level requirements required for entry to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical science programme. The visitors considered this to be important information that potential applicants need to know prior to commencing the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme because of the requirement for the applicant to meet SOP 1b.3 at the point of registration.

This standard states that admissions procedures must include the requirement of evidencing a good command of reading, writing and spoken English from all applicants. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate this standard is met and that they make this information available for potential applicants to the programme. If students enter the programme unable to meet SOP 1b.3 the visitors also require evidence of how the programme will ensure that at the point of registration the applicant will meet SOP 1b.3.

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate there are appropriate processes in place to carry out criminal convictions checks during the admissions procedures. The education provider must also demonstrate how they ensure this requirement is communicated to potential applicants to the programme.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit stated the education provider did not require criminal conviction checks in their admission procedures because "Students on the applied route are supervised at all times when on placement" (SETs mapping document SET 2.2). Discussion with the programme team indicated criminal conviction checks were carried out if the placement provider where a student was placed required a criminal conviction check. The visitors were concerned the education provider had no policies for checking for criminal convictions and then subsequently for dealing with any issues that could arise through such checks.

The visitors were concerned a criminal conviction could become apparent after the student had been accepted onto the programme or was already working at the placement. The education provider would have to manage this situation and it may affect the student's ability to continue on the programme. The guidance for this standard indicates it is the education provider who has the responsibility to make criminal conviction checks during the admissions procedures. The visitors therefore expect to see a process whereby the education provider takes responsibility for facilitating criminal conviction checks and is able to

appropriately deal with any issues that may arise through this, before the applicant is accepted onto the route and is allocated a placement.

The visitors also noted the advertising materials (in particular the website) did not include information about criminal conviction checks required for entry to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme. The visitors considered this to be important information that potential applicants need to know prior to commencing the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate the education provider has appropriate processes in place to carry out criminal convictions checks during the admissions procedures and make this requirement known for potential applicants to the programme.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate they have responsibility of applying selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements and they must make this requirement known for potential applicants to the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated applicants to the programme will need to have evidence of Hepatitis B vaccinations. Discussion with the programme team indicated this was checked through the admissions process by the West Midlands Regional Training Committee (North). This committee is a local group comprised of training leads and training officers from participating hospitals and staff representatives from Staffordshire and Keele universities. The committee is heavily involved in the admissions process and allocation of placements for this programme. Because of the involvement of the West Midlands Regional Training Committee (North) the visitors could not determine where the education provider had responsibility for ensuring compliance with any health requirements. The guidance for this standard indicates it is the education provider who has the responsibility for checks against health requirements therefore the visitors would expect the education provider to have a process in place whereby they verify and record an applicant's vaccination status during the admissions procedures for this programme in order to ensure they are complying with any health requirements for this profession.

The visitors also noted the advertising materials (in particular the website) did not include information about the vaccinations required for entry to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme. The visitors considered this to be important information that potential applicants need to know prior to commencing the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate the education provider has responsibility with applying selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements and they must make this requirement known for potential applicants to the programme.

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Condition: The education provider must implement a formal process for dealing with concerns about students' profession related conduct throughout the programme.

Reason: From the documentation and discussion with the programme team, the visitors identified there was no formal process in place for the education provider to deal with concerns about students' profession related conduct. They did note if concerns were raised about a trainees conduct at placement it would be dealt with via various meetings that include the students, training leads, training officers and Clinical Placement Team if required. It was discussed at the visit that there was no overarching education provider wide policy but some other programmes had procedures in place for their own programmes which the visitors suggest could be used or adapted for use with this programme. The guidance for this standard states the process used should identify and address concerns and allow for an appropriate range of outcomes. The process used must be appropriate to the nature of the programme and the delivery of the programme academically and through placements. This standard requires the programme to have a process in place for dealing with concerns about students' profession related conduct. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to implement a formal process for dealing with concerns about students' profession related conduct throughout the programme.

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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme will ensure that upon successful completion of the programme all students' will meet the following standards of proficiency (SOPs);

- 2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully
    - be able to demonstrate practical skills in instrumentation and techniques in: microscopy; spectroscopy; centrifugation; electrophoresis; chromatography; electroanalytical techniques; automated analysis; immunological techniques; enzyme assays and molecular biology techniques; sterilisation techniques and microbial culture; identification and quantitation of microorganisms; microtomy
- 3a.1 know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice
    - understand the role of the following in the diagnosis and treatment of disease: cellular pathology; clinical biochemistry; clinical haematology; clinical immunology; medical microbiology; medical genetics; transfusion science

Reason: From the programme documentation the visitors were unable to determine how aspects of the SOPs above would be covered in the programme curriculum. In particular, they could not determine where the practical skills and

techniques of microtomy and the key concepts of cellular pathology would be covered.

During discussion the programme team highlighted the taught aspects are for both the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science and the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes and there was the expectation that placements are where the knowledge of the SOPs are concentrated, consolidated and covered in depth. Discussion about the placements indicated students would complete an initial rotation of the different discipline specific laboratories before choosing a specific discipline to work in. It was also indicated that if a student was unable to undertake one of the discipline specific laboratories then the placement providers would accommodate the student elsewhere. In discussion with the students it was highlighted this had happened and an example was given of a student who had not been able to spend time in one of the discipline specific laboratories. The visitors were concerned that if a cellular pathology laboratory was unavailable for a student, that student would not have a chance to consolidate the knowledge of the practical skills and techniques of microtomy and the key concepts of cellular pathology needed to meet the SOPs above. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme will ensure all students will meet the SOP's included in the condition above, upon completion of the programme.

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure all placement settings provide, and continue to provide, a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included the 'Approval of Prospective Placement Provider' form for potential placement providers. This form is used to check that the placement setting would provide a safe and supportive environment. The documentation did not include a form for the monitoring of placements however discussion at the visit confirmed a similar form was used for this. The responsibility for approving and monitoring a placement is held by the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator who is employed outside the education provider. The visitors were concerned the programme team did not have enough of an input to these processes and so were distanced from being able to ensure the placement settings provided safe and supportive environments. The programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including ensuring the placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment. Conditions for SETs 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.9 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are closely linked. The visitors require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure all placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

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. The hospitals (placement providers) which serve this programme also work with another education provider in the area which runs an applied biomedical science programme. The hospitals have formed the West Midlands Regional Training Committee (North) which organises, allocates and oversees placements for both programmes. The 'Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator' has the responsibility for approving placements before students are allocated to them and then for monitoring them annually. This person is employed at a hospital and is a member of the Committee; they act as the main link between placements providers and the education provider.

The documentation included an 'Approval of Prospective Placement Provider' form which is sent to potential placement providers. This form is completed by the placement provider and then passed to the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator who signs it as an approved placement provider. The form is forwarded to the education provider's faculty Health & Safety advisor and counter-signed. There was no form included in the documentation for the monitoring of existing placements, however it was confirmed through discussion a similar form was completed and signed in the same way to monitor the placements.

The visitors considered the West Midlands Regional Training Committee (North) to be an excellent way for the area to effectively organise placements however were concerned the programme team did not have enough of an input to the approving and monitoring of the placements to be used for their students. The programme team must keep overall responsibility for each placement including the management of a formal system to approve and monitor practice placements against criteria set by the programme team.

The visitors considered that with some further involvement from the education provider the 'Approval of Prospective Placement provider' form could be an effective method of initially approving placements. The visitors suggest (if the monitoring form was very similar) the education provider could use it to monitor the placements either alongside the regular placement review meetings or as a separate process carried out regularly to ensure placement suitability is maintained and owned by the education provider.

The approval and monitoring systems can also affect SETs 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.9 so visitors suggest looking at these conditions together. Because the visitors have not seen the form used for the monitoring of placements that was discussed, they require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate they have overall responsibility and maintain a formal process for initially approving and monitoring all placements to ensure its appropriateness.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included the 'Approval of Prospective Placement Provider' form for potential placement providers. This form checked that placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place. The documentation did not include a form for the monitoring of placements however discussion at the visit confirmed a similar form was used for this. The responsibility for approving and monitoring a placement is held by the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator who is employed outside the education provider. The visitors were concerned the programme team did not have enough of an input to these processes and so were distanced from being able to ensure the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place. The programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including ensuring the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place. Conditions for SETs 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.9 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are closely linked. The visitors require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included the 'Approval of Prospective Placement Provider' form for potential placement providers. This form checked that the placement providers have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. The documentation did not include a form for the monitoring of placements however discussion at the visit confirmed a similar form was used for this. The responsibility for approving and monitoring a placement is held by the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator who is employed outside the education provider. The visitors were concerned the programme team did not have enough of an input to these processes and so were distanced from being able to ensure the placement providers have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. The programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including ensuring there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Conditions for SETs 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7 and 5.9 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are closely linked. The visitors require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement provider setting.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included the 'Approval of Prospective Placement Provider' form for potential placement providers. This

form checked that placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience required to work with trainees. The documentation did not include a form for the monitoring of placements however discussion at the visit confirmed a similar form was used for this. The responsibility for approving and monitoring a placement is held by the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator who is employed outside the education provider. The visitors were concerned the programme team did not have enough of an input to these processes and so were distanced from being able to ensure the placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. The programme team must maintain overall responsibility for each placement including ensuring the placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Conditions for SETs 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.9 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are closely linked. The visitors require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure placement educators are informed about the specifics of this programme in advance of receiving students and are updated if changes are made to the programme.

Reason: Discussion and documentation detailed the management of the placements for the programme. The hospitals (placement providers) which serve this programme also work with another education provider in the area which runs an applied biomedical science programme. The hospitals have formed the West Midlands Regional Training Committee (North) which organises, allocates and oversees placements for both programmes. The committee holds regular 'Train the Trainer' events for placement educators involved in both programmes. The visitors were satisfied the placement educators were receiving appropriate training for working with students however could not determine how the placement educators were being informed about the specifics of this particular programme or were provided with updates about any changes made to the programme. This could be done through requiring the placement educators to attend specific sessions or through other means of delivering the content such as through online support, peer support meetings or workshops, visits to the placement or placement educator self-appraisals. The education provider needs to ensure placement educators understand what students on the programme require from their placement experience, how to assess this experience and how any changes made to the programme could affect them. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures placement educators are informed of the specifics of this programme in advance of receiving students and are updated if changes are made to the programme.

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 can ensure placement educators are appropriately registered or how other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included the 'Approval of Prospective Placement Provider' form for potential placement providers. This form checked placement educators' registration status with the HPC. The documentation did not include a form for the monitoring of placements however discussion at the visit confirmed a similar form was used for this. The responsibility for approving and monitoring a placement is held by the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator who is employed outside the education provider. The visitors were concerned the programme team did not have enough of an input to these processes and so were distanced from being able 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. Conditions for SETs 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 should be looked at alongside this condition as they are closely linked. The visitors require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how they can ensure placement educators are appropriately registered or how other arrangements are agreed.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must ensure the programme documentation clearly articulates for students and placement providers the arrangements if a student needs extra provisions put in place to allow them to meet all the competencies at placement.

Reason: From the documentation presented the visitors could not determine what happened if a student was having difficulties with meeting the competencies whilst at placement. The documentation did describe there being regular placement review meetings which took place between the placement educators, students and the Pathology Network Training Co-ordinator. The programme team clarified that at the placement review meetings the students' progress would be discussed and if necessary reasonable provisions such as placing the student in a particular laboratory to enable them to meet those competencies would be made. Further discussion indicated if the student had not been able to meet all the competencies required before the end of placement it was possible to extend the placement to allow all the competencies to be met. There was no set deadline date for the completion of the registration portfolio so no specific extension deadline date. Discussion with the programme team indicated they expected the portfolio to be completed by the end of the placement and if it was not then it was carried on until it had been completed with continued regular review meetings. The visitors were satisfied with the extra provisions put in place

to help students meet their competencies and agreed this information should be included in the programme documentation so students are aware of the procedures there to help them if they need it. The visitors additionally felt if extra time was required then the placement providers should be aware of this possibility before it is needed. The visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure the programme documentation clearly articulates for students and placement providers the possible arrangements for extra provisions.

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 revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate for students and placement providers the extension policies for the registration portfolio including a deadline date by which the registration portfolio must be completed and the results submitted to the examination board.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit stated students would graduate with the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science award provided they complete and are successfully assessed in the registration portfolio and successfully complete the lab tour at the end of their placement. During discussion with the students they indicated these were done at separate times although they could be on the same day. Further discussion indicated if the student had not been able to meet all the competencies required it was possible to extend the placement to allow all the competencies to be met. It was indicated there was no set deadline date for the completion of the registration portfolio so no specific extension deadline date. Discussion with the programme team indicated they expected the registration portfolio to be completed by the end of the placement and if it was not then it was carried on until it had been completed with continued regular review meetings. The programme team also clarified the deadline date for completing the registration portfolio had to be before the examination board sat and confirmed the students' progress and awards. The visitors considered with having no extension policies or specific deadline dates the students would not have a date to work towards. This could impact on the placement providers if they are not expecting to continue the placement beyond the standard timeframe of a placement. This could also mean the student would be able to lodge an appeal of the examination board's decision. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate for students and placement providers the extension policies for the registration portfolio including a deadline date by which the registration portfolio must be completed and the results submitted to the examination board.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate the consequences of failing the placement component of the programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion indicated when a student was having difficulties in meeting the competencies at placement the regular review meetings would pick this up and enable reasonable provisions to be put in place to support

that student. From the documentation and discussion with the students, the visitors were unable to determine what would happen to the student if they failed their placement. Discussions with the programme team clarified if a student failed the placement the student would continue on the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme and not transfer to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme. The programme team also highlighted that each circumstance was looked at on an individual basis and if necessary, arrangements would be made to transfer the student to another programme that would not lead to either eligibility to apply to the HPC Register or to the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) Certificate of Competence. The visitors considered it to be important for students to be aware of the consequences of failing the placement component of the programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate for students the consequences of failing the placement component of the programme.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to include information about examination re-sits.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors could not determine the examination re-sit policies for this programme. Discussion with the programme team indicated that students would have the opportunity to re-sit examinations for all modules in the programme. It was additionally highlighted there was no limit to the number of modules the students could re-sit examinations for. The visitors considered this information to be important for students to be aware of as part of the examination policies in place for this programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to include information about re-sits including which modules can be re-sat and the maximum number of modules that can be re-sat through the programme.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure they clearly articulate in the programme documentation when the student is transferred onto the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit indicated there is a Biomedical Science programme with two routes leading to two different awards, BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science and BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science. It indicated students enter the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme and then move to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme at the end of the first year. During discussion with the programme team it was clarified that it was upon successful completion of the registration portfolio that students transferred to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science award. This has implications when considering the information given to students regarding progression and achievement within the programme. The visitors consider it to be important there is no confusion as to which programme students are on at any given point and so they will be aware of what they need to do to progress and when they will be progressing to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science

programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure programme documentation clearly articulates the details of when students transfer to the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme.

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 may wish to consider making use of the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students as part of teaching students about the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied the curriculum would ensure that students understood the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. During discussions at the visit it was evident that students were encouraged to work with the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors noted the programme did not refer students to the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students. The visitors felt to strengthen the programmes teaching, and the students understanding, of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, the programme could make the Guidance document available directly for students or refer them to it.

Christine Murphy
Phil Warren

Observations on Visitors Report

Staffordshire University

BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science
Full time
Relevant part of HPC register: Biomedical Scientist
Date of visit: 25 – 26th January 2012

Please note that our observations related to the page numbers and sections of the Visitors report.

Page 2 – Executive Summary

In discussion with Ruth Wood, we will submit all amended documentation to the HPC no later than Monday 30th April 2012.

Page 3 – Introduction

In response to the comment in margin; the proposed student numbers are to be stated as a maximum of **6 per cohort**. In addition, we will provide information to prospective students on the ratio of applicants for placements: number of placements, using figures from previous cohorts for illustrative purposes.

Page 6 & 7 – Conditions: 2.2 from your report

"Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the admissions procedures for the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science did not include any English-language level requirements. In discussion with the programme team they indicated they believed because this was a UK delivered programme, students graduating from this programme did not need to meet the standard of proficiency (SOP) 1b.3, which outlines English communication requirements for registrants. As a result they did not have any English level requirements in their admissions procedures for this programme. This information is incorrect in that all registrants will need to be able to meet SOP 1b.3 in order to register with the HPC and then continue to meet this SOP in order to maintain their registration status. This programme needs to ensure that upon successful completion graduates are able to meet SOP 1b.3. "

Observations:

- The visitors were provided with the programme specification which includes a statement about the English-language level requirements on page 9.

- "As a result they did not have any English level requirements in their admissions procedures for this programme". We do have an English Language requirement for this programme which is currently IELTS 6.0 (programme specification page 9).

- "In discussion with the programme team they indicated they believed because this was a UK delivered programme, students graduating from this programme did not need to meet the standard of proficiency (SOP) 1b.3". We wish to state that we **fully recognise** the need for students graduating from the programme to have English communication requirements, but that we understood that, as graduates from a UK delivered programme they would meet

this requirement. However, in response to your concerns, we are looking to amend our entry requirements to include IELTS 7.0 for all applicants.

Page 9 – Conditions, 3.16 from your report:

"Reason: From the documentation and discussion with the programme team, the visitors identified there was no formal process in place for the education provider to deal with concerns about students' profession related conduct."

Observation:

- We disagree with the statement that there is no formal process in place to raise concerns about a students' profession related conduct. This can be found on pages 5 & 6 of the Clinical Placement Student handbook. However, in light of your comments and our discussions, we will be strengthening our processes by dovetailing into the Faculty of Science Fitness to Practice panel and its further formalised procedures.

Page 9 & 10 – Conditions, 4.1 from your report

"Reason: From the programme documentation the visitors were unable to determine how aspects of the SOPs above would be covered in the programme curriculum. In particular, they could not determine where the practical skills and techniques of microtomy and the key concepts of cellular pathology would be covered.

During discussion the programme team highlighted the taught aspects are for both the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science and the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes and there was the expectation that placements are where the knowledge of the SOPs are concentrated, consolidated and covered in depth. Discussion about the placements indicated students would complete an initial rotation of the different discipline specific laboratories before choosing a specific discipline to work in."

Observation:

- We wish to make clear that students do not choose the discipline in which to work, but that through the network, students are offered disciplines that are available within their placements. The wording should be altered to reflect this.

Page 14 – Conditions, 5.11 from your report

"5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**

- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must ensure the programme documentation clearly articulates for students and placement providers the arrangements if a student needs extra provisions put in place to allow them to meet all the competencies at placement. "

Observation:

- Whilst we are fully aware of the need for HPC to ensure that we (the education provider) meet all of the SOPs and SETs, we feel that the condition given above is a very specific part of SET 5.11 and that external viewers of this report may read the text of SET 5.11 and be concerned that we do not fulfil any of this standard. We feel we fulfil the majority of this standard except the point made with respect to the condition i.e. extra time provision. We request that this could be reflected in the wording in order that prospective students are not concerned about the greater integrity of our programme.

Page 16 – Conditions, 6.7 (bottom of page 16) from your report

"Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors could not determine the examination re-sit policies for this programme. Discussion with the programme team indicated that students would have the opportunity to re-sit examinations for all modules in the programme. It was additionally highlighted there was no limit to the number of modules the students could re-sit examinations for."

Observation:

- The examination re-sit policies for the programme are provided in the student handbook (page 20 of the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science/ Applied Biomedical Science Student Handbook), which contains a clickable link to the University Undergraduate Module Framework regulations. In addition information about further assessment opportunities due to extenuating circumstances are also provided in the student handbook beginning on page 20. Nonetheless, we will revise the existing wording in order to clarify further for students the re-sit and related policies.

Page 18 – Recommendations

Observation:

- Your report states that 'The visitors noted the programme did not refer students to the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'. The HPC's guidance on conduct and ethics forms part of the material in Professional Practice for Biomedical Scientists and is available on the Blackboard course pages. Students are able to download it and are required to refer to it in a cross mapping exercise as part of this module.

We have no further observations.

Thank you

Dr Angela Priestman, Subject Leader Biological and Biomedical Sciences (contact for queries)
Dr Pauline Gowland – Award Leader for Biomedical and Applied Biomedical Science
Dr Peter Gowland – Clinical Placement co-ordinator

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Ulster
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	21 – 23 February 2012

Contents

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. The education provider has until 13 April 2012 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 10 May 2012. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 1 June 2012. The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Committee on the approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Committee on 23 August 2012.

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) Physiotherapy, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography, BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology 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	Joanna Goodwin (Occupational therapist) Valerie Maehle (Physiotherapist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ben Potter
Proposed student numbers	54
First approved intake	October 1980
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Hugh McKenna (University of Ulster)
Secretary	Catherine Avery (University of Ulster)
Members of the joint panel	Jan Jensen (Internal Panel Member) Karen Morris (College of Occupational Therapists) Lyn Westcott (College of Occupational Therapists) Anna Clampin (College of Occupational Therapists)

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	☒	☐	☐

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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 56 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining SET.

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

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation and the programme content.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, there were instances of out-of-date terminology in reference to HPC 'accrediting' the programme (e.g. document B1 p1), and that students should refer to the HPC 'code of conduct' (e.g. document B p14 and p218). The HPC does not 'accredit' education programmes, as a statutory regulator we 'approve' education programmes. It is also the case that the HPC does not have a code of conduct, instead HPC has standards of conduct performance and ethics and produces a publication 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'. The visitors also noted there were references to the module 'Body- structure for occupational performance' (e.g. document B p218) which was clarified is no longer part of the programme. The visitors considered the terminology could be misleading to students and therefore required the documentation to be reviewed to remove any instances of incorrect or out-of-date terminology throughout.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of any changes to the programme documentation, if any are made, to ensure it effectively supports student learning in all settings.

Reason: Through reviewing programme documentation the visitors were aware of the documentation that will be provided to students to support their learning in all settings. However, the visitors noted in discussion with the programme team the university has set certain conditions on the programme as part of the re-validation process. As part of these conditions several aspects of the programme documentation may be changed to fit the education providers' requirements. In particular the education provider had highlighted areas for discussion around the module descriptors and also the titles of the exit awards from the programme. The visitors highlighted that if the programme documentation changes as a result of the education provider's processes this may affect how the programme continues to meet this standard. The visitors therefore require the programme team to consider what effect, if any, changes made to the programme documentation may have on how the programme continues to meet this standard. In particular the visitors require the programme team to articulate if any changes have been made so they can be sure the documentation to be used by the programme will effectively support student learning in all settings.

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Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider including a formalised method of ensuring that practice placement educators' are HPC registered as part of the practice placement approval and monitoring processes.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team, and the practice placement providers, it was confirmed an effective method of ensuring practice placement educators are HPC registered is in place. The visitors were therefore satisfied this standard is met. However, the visitors noted this method did not form part of the education provider's formal mechanisms for approving and monitoring practice placements. Instead an increased burden fell on practice placement providers to ensure the practice placement educators supervising students from the programme are appropriately registered. The visitors recommend the education provider considers a formalised way, through their existing approval mechanisms, in which they can capture the information regarding practice placement educators' registration. In this way the education provider may reduce some of the burden on practice placement providers and have a more robust set of data to quality assure practice placements.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider identifying, through the module descriptors, which specific learning outcomes will be met through successful completion of specific assessments.

Reason: Through reviewing the programme documentation the visitors noted each module descriptor had comprehensive information about what learning outcomes a student may meet through the completion of each module. They were therefore satisfied this standard is met. However, in discussion with the programme team it was clarified a certain number of these learning outcomes may be compounded and shared between several modules. As such, the list of learning outcomes for each module may not refer specifically to the actions undertaken in that module but from several modules undertaken as part of the programme. The visitors therefore recommend the programme team consider articulating within the module descriptors the specific learning outcomes that will be met as a result of successfully completing the assessment associated with that module. In this way the programme team may be able to more clearly articulate which learning outcomes are being assessed and how. In turn this may aid students' understanding of their progression through the programme by identifying where and how they have met key learning outcomes.

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Joanna Goodwin
Valerie Maehle

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HPC VISITORS' REPORT
University of Ulster
BSc Hons Occupational Therapy / BSc Hons Physiotherapy

OBSERVATIONS to sets 5.9 and 6.7

Recommendations

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<u>Observation</u>

A robust system is currently in place within each Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust in Northern Ireland as all employers are *required* to check the HPC registration status of all prospective AHP employees. The Human Resource (HR) department of each HSC Trust is tasked with this responsibility and all prospective AHP employees are required to submit their HPC registration documents to the HR department where a copy is retained in staff files. No additional burden is therefore placed upon practice placement providers to check practice educators' registration details through their involvement with the placement scheme associated with the programme nor would the existing 'burden' be reduced through the School introducing a system for capturing this information. As recommended, the School will introduce a formal method of ensuring that practice placement educators are HPC registered as part of the practice placement approval and monitoring processes. .

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider identifying, through the module descriptors, which specific learning outcomes will be met through successful completion of specific assessments.

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Observation

The School can confirm that all learning outcomes listed for each module *do* refer specifically to the actions undertaken in that module and would be achieved within that module through successful completion of the assessments. The replication of a learning outcome in more than one module is an indication that the learning associated with that outcome will be reinforced within a number of different learning contexts. As recommended, the School will identify in each module descriptor which specific learning outcomes will be met through successful completion of specific assessments.