

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Wales Institute of Cardiff
Validating body / Awarding body	University of Wales
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	13 – 14 April 2010

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title '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. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 16 September 2010. At the Committee meeting on 16 September 2010, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider and validating body validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programme – BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science Full Time. 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	Christine Murphy (Biomedical Scientist) Pradeep Agrawal (Biomedical Scientist)
HPC executive officer in attendance	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	10
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2010
Chair	Paul Thomas (University of Wales Institute Cardiff)
Secretary	Anne Cox (University of Wales Institute Cardiff)
Members of the joint panel	Peter Redding (Internal Panel Member) Andy Roberts (Internal Panel Member) Sue Easmon (External Panel Member) Alan Wainwright (Institute of Biomedical Science) Patrick Naughton (Institute of Biomedical Science) Nick Kirk (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	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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"/>

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 48 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 9 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 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 approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

2.1 The 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 revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure that it addresses the exact nature of the Applied Biomedical Sciences (ABMS) route and the exact nature of the Biomedical Science (BMS) route. During the admission procedures it must be made clear to applicants the differences between the BMS route and the ABMS route. Applicants and students must also be made aware of which programme of learning they are enrolling on to and the mechanisms and selection criteria for the transfer between the two routes.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation submitted showed a lack of clarity around the BMS route and the ABMS route and the transfer mechanisms between the two. From a review of the documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors could not determine how applicants were told about the two different routes and the transfer between them. From discussions with the senior management team it was clear that the education provider had previously offered several BMS programmes with separate UCAS codes. It was made clear to the visitors that for the next cohort, all students will enrol onto the BMS route and apply for the ABMS route in year two of the programme. The visitors would therefore like this to be made clear within the programme documentation and advertising materials to ensure an applicant has the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and outline the process for checking the quality of placements. The education provider must also produce guidelines on their placement requirements, articulating what they constitute as a safe and supportive placement environment.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and discussions with the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors could find no evidence of a mechanism in place to check and monitor the quality of practice placements and therefore demonstrate that the education provider was responsible for managing the placements in the programme. The visitors noted that the education provider used the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment of laboratories as a measure of placement quality. The visitors could not find any evidence that this process has been audited and in turn could not be sure that the education provider has full ownership of the process. The visitors require further evidence of the placement auditing process and the guidelines in place to ensure that the education provider can make a judgement on whether placements are good quality and provide safe and supportive environments.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation and produce clear policies and procedures to support the approval and monitoring of placements.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team the visitors did not have enough evidence to demonstrate that the education provider has a thorough and effective system in place for the approval and monitoring of placements, and therefore that the education provider was responsible for the placements in the programme. The visitors noted that the education provider used the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment of laboratories as a measure of placement quality. The visitors could not find any evidence that this process has been audited and in turn could not be sure that the education had full ownership of the process. The visitors require the education provider to produce clear policies and procedures around placements in the programme to ensure that this standard is met.

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 information about the way in which they monitor the equality and diversity policies of practice placements. The education provider must also clarify the mechanisms that they use to inform students about access to these policies.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors could find no evidence of a mechanism in place to monitor the equality and diversity policies of its practice placements. The visitors also require evidence that demonstrates how students are informed about accessing the equality and diversity policies on placements and what to do if they feel they have been discriminated against whilst on placement.

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

Condition: The education provider must clarify the placement audit and document a clear process for monitoring staff numbers and experience within the placements utilised on the programme. The education provider must also document the criteria by which they judge staff to be appropriately qualified and experienced.

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit and speaking to the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors could find no evidence of a mechanism in place to check and monitor the quality of practice placements and therefore demonstrate that the education provider was responsible for managing the placements in the programme. The visitors require further information to clarify the mechanisms that the education provider uses to

monitor the staff numbers and experience of its practice placements and details of the staff numbers and experience requirements that the education provider sets to ensure that placement staff support student learning in a safe environment.

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

Condition: The education provider must clarify the placement audit and document a clear process for monitoring knowledge, skills and experience of practice placement educators.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team and practice placement providers the visitors could find no mechanism in place to check and monitor the knowledge, skills and experience of practice placement educators. The visitors require further information to clarify the mechanisms that the education provider uses to monitor the knowledge, skills and experience of its practice placement educators.

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

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate the mechanism they use to ensure practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training. The education provider must also clearly articulate the mechanism they use to ensure the practice placement educators training is recorded and monitored.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team and placement providers it was not made clear that sufficient arrangements are in place to prepare practice placement educators to supervise students on the programme. The visitors require clarification of how the education provider ensures the suitability of this training in preparing educators to take students from this programme. The visitors were not given any indication of the content of the clinical educator training and the learning outcomes for this training. The visitors seek reassurance that mechanisms are in place to ensure that all new practice placement educators are trained.

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 revisit the programme documentation to ensure that the content and terminology used is appropriate and relevant to students studying this programme on a part time mode of study.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit it was noted that there are a number of references to part time students going on placement. From discussions with the programme team it was clear that part time students use their own work place to evidence the placement hours. The visitors require the documentation to clarify this and amend the documentation so that there is no ambiguity between part time students and practice placement educators.

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 revisit the programme documentation and outline the process for training portfolio verifiers to assess the standards of proficiency. The education provider must also provide details outlining the organisation of this assessment.

Reason: From the documentation submitted it was not clear who would be assessing the practice placement elements and the IBMS portfolio. The visitors require further evidence regarding the assessment of the placement module in the programme including details of the methods of assessments, what is required as part of the placement assessments, the timescales involved and clarification of the actions taken if the timescales or assessment requirements are not met. The visitors noted that if the education provider were to use IBMS verifiers to assess students on placements, as was indicated at the visit, they would not be assessing the specific learning outcomes for the placement programme. The visitors require evidence of the training that will be provided to verifiers for the requirements of the programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that the assessment methods used ensure that the students are meeting the standards of proficiency and are clearly communicated to all parties involved in the programme to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

Recommendations

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider introducing mandatory attendance across all elements of teaching within the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that mandatory attendance is required on the programme within practical sessions. At the visit the programme team discussed the success of this but mentioned that some students do not attend lectures that support the practical sessions. The visitors felt that introducing the mandatory provision across all elements of teaching would strengthen the delivery of the programme

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

Recommendation: The visitors wish to strongly recommend that the education provider checks that all practice placement educators are HPC registered

Reason: The visitors recommend that the education provider checks the registration status of all placement educators to see if they are on the HPC register as an additional level of security for the education providers' placement management.

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.**

Recommendation: The education provider should consider revisiting the clinical laboratory practice (placement) handbook to ensure that it is applicable to both students and practice placement educators.

Reason: The visitors recommend that the education provider considers revisiting the clinical laboratory practice (placement) handbook to put a greater focus on the clinical laboratory learning outcomes. The visitors considered the document to be very broad in its approach and would recommend signposting students and practice placement educators to specific sections relevant to the module being learnt.