Visitors' report

Name of education provider	City University
Programme name	Doctorate in Health Psychology (Dpsych)
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Health psychologist
Date of visit	7 – 8 June 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 'Practitioner psychologist' or 'Health psychologist' 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. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 4 December 2012. At the Committee meeting on 4 December 2012, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. 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 the practitioner psychology profession came onto the register in July 2009 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. 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 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	Kathryn Thirlaway (Health psychologist)
	Rosemary Schaeffer (Occupational psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	David Christopher
Proposed cohort number	11 per cohort
First approved intake	January 2003
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Louise Markes (City University)
Secretary	Erika Suchanova (City University)
Members of the joint panel	Liz Simpson (British Psychological Society)
	Caroline Limbert (British Psychological Society)
	Geraldine Kavanagh (British Psychological Society)

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	☒	☐	☐
Joint HPC approval and British Psychological Society accreditation event appendices	☒	☐	☐

The HPC did not review CVs for all relevant staff prior to the visit because the CVs of some staff were missing from the documentation provided. However, the education provider tabled the missing CVs at the visit.

The HPC did not review descriptions of the modules prior to the visit as this documentation does not exist. However, the education provider provided PowerPoint presentations for the workshops that students attend.

The HPC did not review a practice placement handbook prior to the visit as a separate practice placement handbook has not been produced. Information relating to placements is included in the programme handbook. However, the education provider is developing a handbook for practice placement educators and a draft version of this document was made available at the 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)	☒	☐	☐

The visitors were able to talk to one practice placement provider whose organisation had provided a new placement for a student within the last two

months. Due to late withdrawals the visitors did not meet any practice placement educators.

Due to illness and late withdrawals the visitors met a former student who had completed the programme in 2009. However, the education provider organised a Skype video-conference, which allowed the visitors to talk to two current students.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 36 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 21 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

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 the terminology used is accurate and is reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HPC.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider prior to the visit did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. One of the programme documents 'Professional Doctoral Training in Health Psychology' stated that the programme was 'recognised' by the HPC. The HPC 'approves' programmes. The programme handbook included reference to HPC codes of conduct. The HPC publishes standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors require the education provider to revise all programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for applicants and students.

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

Condition: The education provider must identify clear health requirements in the information it makes available to applicants and set out the process for dealing with any health issues that are declared.

Reason: The SETs mapping document provided by the education provider included no evidence against this standard. In advance of the visit, clarification was sought from the education provider. The response was that the programme did not have any health checks as part of its admissions process because most students did not work in clinical settings. In discussions with the programme team, the education provider confirmed this position. The visitors were unsure how the education provider ensured that it had taken all reasonable steps to identify any health issues that could affect a student's ability to undertake the programme safely and effectively, or had made any reasonable adjustments that might be required by a new student. The visitors therefore require the education provider to identify clear health requirements in the information it makes available to applicants and set out the process for dealing with any health issues that are declared.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included a department plan and programme team plan. However, references to the programme in the department plan were difficult to identify and consequently the visitors were unable to determine the level of support for the programme. In discussions, the education provider's senior managers confirmed that the programme had a secure place in the education provider's business plan and referred to a strategic plan, which demonstrated the importance attached to the programme. However, the visitors were not provided with a copy of this strategic plan. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide a copy of this strategic plan, so they can be assured that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence about the student complaints process and how students are informed about this process.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated that the evidence for this standard was included in the programme handbook. The visitors noted that the handbook included a link to the complaints process, but there was no information in the handbook itself about the process. The visitors were also unclear how students were informed about the process. In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that there was an institution-wide complaints process. However, the visitors were not provided with a copy of this process. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence about the student complaints process and clarification of how students are informed about this process to ensure that this standard is met.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to clearly articulate the process for obtaining student consent to participate in teaching and learning activities, including the procedures when consent is withheld.

Reason: The SETs mapping document submitted prior to the visit included no evidence for this standard. In advance of the visit, clarification was sought from the education provider. The response was that students do not participate as service users in practical teaching. However, consideration of the programme specification indicated that role-playing was a key element of the workshops offered as part of the programme. This was confirmed by the students, although they were not aware of any formal process for obtaining their consent to participate in such activities. The programme team explained that students were expected to participate in all workshops, although it was made clear to them that they could opt out of participation in any role-playing, which formed part of these workshops. However, the visitors noted that there was no formal protocol for seeking student consent to participate, or to indicate what would happen if consent was withheld. The visitors therefore require the education provider to articulate clearly the process by which consent for participation in such teaching and learning activities is obtained and how cases where consent is withheld are handled.

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.

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to articulate clearly the process for dealing with prolonged absences from practice placements.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit indicated that the evidence for this standard was included in the programme handbook. The visitors noted that the handbook made clear that attendance at workshops was mandatory and would be monitored. Discussions with students confirmed that this was the case. The handbook also indicated that students were required to inform their practice placement educator (referred to as a workplace supervisor by the education provider) of any periods of sickness longer than two weeks that prevented them from engaging in the supervised practice. However, it was unclear how the education provider would be informed of such cases and what steps might be taken to ensure that a student addressed any teaching and learning opportunities that had been missed. The practice placement provider was unaware of a formal process, but confirmed that if there was prolonged absence guidance would be sought from the education provider. The visitors noted that the education provider was developing a handbook for practice placement educators and welcomed this as a way of improving the information provided about the education provider's requirements. However, in the absence of any current guidance on this area it was unclear to the visitors how such absences would be handled and whether absenteeism would be dealt with consistently. The visitors therefore require the education provider to articulate clearly in its documentation the process for dealing with prolonged absences from practice placements.

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 provide documentation setting out the procedures for identifying and addressing concerns about students' profession-related conduct and how these procedures will be communicated to students and practice placement educators.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated that evidence for this standard was included in the programme handbook. However, the reference given related to progression and an annual review and was not clearly related to students' profession-related conduct. Discussions with the practice placement provider indicated that, if there were any concerns about students' profession-related conduct, the education provider would be contacted for guidance. Students indicated that they were provided with information about the standards of conduct expected of them, although they were not specific about how and when this was communicated. Discussions with the programme team revealed that the education provider had been using an institution-wide code of conduct to address such concerns. However, the education provider was developing a new process to deal with profession-related conduct following consultation with stakeholders and other education providers offering approved programmes. The visitors noted that a draft process was available, although this was not provided for consideration. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide

documentation setting out the procedures for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct and how these will be communicated to students and practice placement educators to ensure that this standard is met.

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 demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency for counselling psychologists.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit included a document showing how the programme's learning outcomes mapped onto the standards of proficiency (SOPs). The visitors noted that this document provided evidence that a number of the SOPs were addressed by the programme's learning outcomes. However, it was not evident that all the SOPs were addressed. The visitors noted that the education provider did not conduct any further detailed mapping to show how the programme's learning outcomes mapped onto specific teaching and learning opportunities and demonstrated how all the SOPs were met. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme's learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet all SOPs to ensure that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to articulate clearly the process for approving and monitoring practice placements to ensure that they provide a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated that the evidence for this standard was included in the programme handbook and supported by visits to practice placements. The programme handbook included general information about practice placements and the education provider's requirements, including a document 'Safety Procedure No 13: work Placements for Students'. In addition, practice placement educators were sent a questionnaire, which included questions relating to health and safety issues and were asked to provide a copy of their organisation's health and safety policy. The practice placement provider stated that there was ongoing communication with the education provider about placements. The students indicated that work-based risk assessments had been completed by their employers. However, although the education provider had undertaken a risk assessment of one of the placements, it was not evident that this had not been done for the other student's placement, which had commenced in October 2011.

The documentation provided included some inconsistencies about when a first visit to a placement occurred. The programme handbook indicated that this would be within four to six months, although another document 'Doctorate in Health Psychology at City University' indicated that a visit would take place within three to four months. Discussions with the programme team revealed that the education provider was aware of the need to develop its arrangements for

interacting with practice placement providers and educators and had recently appointed a new member of staff to lead in this area. A handbook for practice placement educators was also being developed. The programme team stated that the intention was to visit placements as soon as possible, but they were sensitive to the wishes of students, some of whom did not wish a visit to be conducted in the first few months on the programme. The education provider was keen to ensure that all students were educated in a safe environment and maintained contact to ensure that this was the case. The visitors noted that if, for example, a student was working with difficult patients or undertaking lone work, the placement provider was expected to ensure that this was conducted safely. The visitors remained unclear about the process by which the education provider ensured that placements provided a safe and supportive environment. In order to be reassured that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to articulate clearly the processes for approving and monitoring placements to ensure that they 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 of a thorough and effective system in place for approving and monitoring all practice placements.

Reason: In advance of the visit the education provider confirmed that it did not have a separate practice placement handbook for students. The documentation provided prior to the visit indicated that the evidence for this standard was included in the programme handbook. The programme handbook included information about practice placements and the education provider's requirements relating to having a practice placement contact, job description and the development of a supervision plan, which sets out how a student will gain the required experience. As already noted in the condition relating to SET 5.3, the visitors were informed that the relationship with practice placement providers and educators was an area that the education provider wished to develop. Accordingly, a new member of staff responsible for practice placements had been appointed and a practice placement handbook for placement educators was being developed. The visitors welcomed the appointment of a new member of staff to lead this work and the decision to develop a handbook for practice placement educators.

Although the programme handbook and draft practice placement educators handbook provided some useful information, the visitors found it difficult to understand the education provider's arrangements for approving and monitoring placements. Much of the information relating to placements was spread across the documents provided and it was difficult to gain a coherent understanding of the processes involved. The visitors therefore require the education provider to clearly articulate its process for approving and monitoring placements 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.

11

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to articulate clearly the requirement for practice placement providers to have equality and diversity policies and to set out the steps taken to ensure that these policies are implemented and monitored within practice placements.

Reason: The SETs mapping document provided prior to the visit indicated that the evidence for this standard was included in the programme handbook and supported by practice placement visits. However, it was not clear to the visitors that this documentation was relevant to this standard. In discussions with the programme team it was suggested that questionnaire sent to practice placement educators included a question about equality and diversity policies. However, on reviewing this questionnaire, the visitors could find no such question. It was therefore unclear to the visitors what steps were in place to ensure that practice placement providers had and implemented such policies. The visitors therefore require the education provider to clearly articulate the requirement for practice placement providers to have equality and diversity policies and the steps taken to ensure that these policies are implemented and monitored within practice placements.

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

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to clearly articulate the criteria for practice placement educators, in terms of the required qualifications and experience, and the steps taken to check that these criteria are met.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included some inconsistencies in relation to the requirements to be a practice placement educator. The programme handbook stated that placement educators would ideally be a chartered psychologist but included no reference to HPC registration. However, other documentation suggested that placement educators would be HPC registered. The programme handbook also set out the roles and responsibilities of the practice placement educator, but did not indicate the criteria for becoming a placement educator. In discussions, the programme team explained the process for approving placements and the measures taken, including visitors, to monitor placements. However, it was unclear to visitors what steps were taken to ensure that placement educators had appropriate qualifications and experience. Discussions with students revealed that neither student was supervised by an HPC registered practice placement educator. The visitors therefore require the education provider to articulate clearly the criteria for practice placement educators, in terms of required qualifications and experience, and the processes for ensuring that these criteria are met.

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

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to clearly articulate the criteria for practice placement educators, in terms of the required knowledge, skills and experience, and the steps taken to check that these criteria are met.

Reason: As noted in the condition against SET 5.6, the visitors were unclear about the steps taken to ensure that suitable practice placement educators were in place, including whether they had appropriate knowledge, skills and experience. To ensure that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to articulate clearly the criteria for placement supervisors, in terms of the required knowledge, skills and experience, and the steps taken to check that these criteria are met.

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

Condition: The education provider must put in place a process for providing practice placement educators with training about the requirements of the programme.

Reason: The SETs mapping document provided in advance of the visit included no evidence for this standard. Discussions with the programme team confirmed that there was no formal training, although there was frequent contact and discussion with colleagues from the practice placements. The visitors noted the intention, already referred to, to improve contacts with placement providers and educators and the development of a handbook for placement educators. However, in the absence of any formal training for placement educators, the visitors were unclear how the education provider ensured that placement educators understood the programme's requirements. The visitors therefore require the education provider to articulate clearly the arrangements that will be put in place to ensure that all practice placement educators are informed and kept up to date about the programme's requirements.

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

Condition: The education provider must articulate clearly in programme documentation the expectation that placement educators should be appropriately registered and, where this is not the case, the steps that will be taken to ensure that appropriate placement educators are in place.

Reason: As noted in the condition against SET 5.6, there was some inconsistency in the documentation as to whether placement educators were expected to be registered with the HPC. In discussions with students it was clear that neither were supervised by an HPC registered professional. In discussions, the programme team indicated that there were insufficient registered health psychologists to supervise all students, but that when approving a programme, they were concerned to ensure that placement educators were appropriately experienced. The visitors require the education provider to articulate clearly in programme documentation that placement educators should be appropriately registered and, where this is not possible, the steps that will be taken to ensure that appropriate placement educators are in place.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further documentary evidence about the current practice placement educators that are in place, including their registration status and, where they are not registered, details of their qualifications and experience.

Reason: As noted in conditions set against SETs 5.6 and 5.7, the visitors were concerned about the steps taken to ensure that appropriately registered, qualified and experienced placement educators were in place. The criteria for becoming a placement educator were unclear and the steps taken to check their appropriateness were not articulated clearly. The visitors could not be certain therefore that all students were supervised by placement educators with appropriate registration. To be assured that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to provide further documentary information about the registration status of current placement educators and, where they are not registered, details of the qualifications and experience which make them suitable to undertake this role.

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 provide further documentary evidence of the steps taken to ensure that placement educators are well prepared for students before they commence the programme.

Reason: As indicated in the condition set against SET 5.8, the visitors noted that there is currently no formal training offered to practice placement educators. Although the practice placement provider and programme team indicated that there was ongoing contact with placement educators, the visitors were unsure whether placement educators were appropriately prepared when students start the programme. The visitors noted that steps were being taken to improve links with placement providers and educators through the appointment of a new member of staff to lead in this area and the development of a handbook for placement educators. To ensure that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to provide further documentary evidence of the steps taken to prepare practice placement educators before students start the programme.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to articulate clearly the processes for making service users aware of the status of students and for obtaining their consent.

Reason: In the documentation provided prior to the visit, no evidence was provided in relation to this standard. In discussions, students confirmed that they inform service users of their trainee status, but were unaware of any formal requirements or guidance from the programme. The programme team informed the visitors that students were advised to make service users aware of their status and to seek consent appropriately, but confirmed that there was no formal protocol. The visitors therefore require the education provider to articulate clearly the processes for making service users aware of the status of trainees and for obtaining their consent.

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 demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency for counselling psychologists.

Reason: In line with the visitors' concerns relating to SET 4.1, they noted that the mapping documentation provided prior to the visit did not clearly indicate how all students who successfully completed the programme demonstrated that they had met all the standards of proficiency. The visitors were therefore unable to be confident that this standard was met. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme's assessment strategy and design ensures that all students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency to ensure that this standard is met.

6.5 The assessment of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practice.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the role of practice placement educators in the assessment of students and how the measurement of student performance on placements ensures fitness to practise.

Reason: In documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors noted that the programme handbook indicated that practice placement educators were responsible for providing feedback on a student's performance on certain areas of competence as requested by the student's academic supervisor and the programme leader. The visitors also noted that when a student submitted evidence for assessment they were required to submit a workplace contact report which the practice placement educator signed and confirmed that the student had, in their opinion, completed the work to a satisfactory professional standard. However, practice placement educators received no formal training so the visitors were unclear how the placement educators could make such judgements without detailed knowledge of the programme's learning outcomes or the standards to be applied.

In discussions, the programme team stated that the information provided by the practice placement educators was taken into account with the other evidence submitted for assessment, but that assessment was conducted by an internal and an external examiner. In response to a question about who assessed students' competence during placements, the programme team stated that this was conducted by the academic supervisors, but confirmed that there was no direct observation of students in practice, other than the observation of one teaching and training session delivered by the student. The visitors were therefore unclear how the education provider could ensure that the assessment arrangements in place for placements ensured fitness to practise. The visitors therefore require further information about the role of practice placement educators in the assessment of students and the steps taken to ensure that the measurement of student performance on placements ensures fitness to practise.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that the masters degree, postgraduate diploma and postgraduate certificate exit awards do not confer eligibility to apply for HPC registration.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit made no explicit reference to an aegrotat award. However, the programme specification indicated that students who failed the doctorate could be eligible to be awarded a masters degree, postgraduate diploma or a postgraduate certificate, depending on the number of credits achieved. This information was not included in the programme handbook or any other programme documentation. In discussions, the programme team stated students were informed that these awards did not confer eligibility to apply for HPC registration. However, the programme specification did not contain a clear statement to this effect, which could lead to a misunderstanding about the status of these exit awards. The visitors therefore require the education provider to include a clear statement in the programme documentation that the masters degree, postgraduate diploma and postgraduate certificate exit awards do not confer eligibility to apply for HPC registration to ensure that this standard is met.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The programme documentation must be revised to include a clear statement that at least one external advisor for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: Visitors noted that, as the programme came under the education provider's research degree regulations, the external examiner was called an external advisor. The programme handbook included reference to the role of the external advisor, but did not indicate the knowledge, skills or expertise required of those undertaking this role. The visitors were satisfied with the current external advisor, but were concerned that the requirements relating to external advisors

were not set out in the programme documentation. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to include a clear statement that at least one external advisor for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register (health psychologist), unless other arrangements are agreed, to demonstrate that this standard is met.

Recommendations

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including the evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Recommendation: The education provider should considering reviewing the information conveyed to potential applications about the requirements for a good command of reading, writing and Spoken English to ensure that they are consistent.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation included requirements in relation to competency in English. However, there was some inconsistency in the communication of these requirements to applicants. The visitors suggested that it would be helpful to potential applicants for whom English was not the first language if the information about the levels required in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) requirements were stated consistently across the programme documentation.

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how data collected about applicants and students can be used to inform future recruitment strategies.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that this standard is met. The visitors noted that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in place and collects data in relation to applicants and students. However, the visitors would like to encourage the education provider to give further consideration to this data in order to determine whether it can identify any trends or information that could be used to inform future recruitment strategies.

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider making explicit in the programme documentation the students' entitlement to a minimum of 10 supervisory meetings each year with their academic supervisor.

Reason: The visitors noted the supervisory arrangements that were in place and the roles and responsibilities as set out in the programme handbook. Students were very positive about the level of supervision and support provided by academic supervisors. In discussions, the programme team confirmed that each student was entitled to a minimum of 10 supervisory meetings with their academic supervisor each year. This information was not included in the handbook and the visitors suggested that the education provider should consider including it in the programme documentation so that students were aware of this entitlement.

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to review and develop its collaborative arrangements with practice placement providers to ensure that collaboration is effective.

Reason: The visitors noted that the education provider had identified links with practice placement providers and educators as an area for development and had appointed a member of staff to coordinate and lead this area. The visitors welcomed the greater focus that was being placed on interaction and collaboration with placement providers as this is vital to the success of placements. The visitors therefore wished to encourage the education provider to continue to review, develop and strengthen its relationships with practice placement providers to ensure that collaboration in this area is effective.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the programme documentation to ensure that information provided about the number of credits awarded is clear and consistent.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme handbook contained conflicting information about the total number of credits that would be awarded for the programme and for individual modules. The visitors therefore suggested that the education provider should consider reviewing the programme documentation to ensure that the information about credits is accurate and consistent.

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Kathryn Thirlaway
Rosemary Schaeffer

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