Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Newcastle University
Programme name	Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Educational psychologist
Date of visit	25 – 26 April 2012

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Practitioner psychologist' or 'Educational 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 23 August 2012. At the Committee meeting on 23 August 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	Judith Bamford (Educational psychologist) Allan Winthrop (Counselling psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
HPC observer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	10 per cohort
First approved intake	September 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Simon Pallett (Newcastle University)
Secretary	Simon Meacher (Newcastle University)
Members of the joint panel	Andy Allen (British Psychological Society) Liz Malcolm (British Psychological Society) Andrew Richards (British Psychological Society) Molly Ross (British Psychological Society) Sarah Wright (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	☒	☐	☐
Programme information: regulations, committee minutes, annual review reports, admission processes, equality and diversity policy, equal opportunities monitoring data	☒	☐	☐

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 ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 4 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 revise the programme advertising materials to ensure potential applicants have the information they require in order to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the management of admissions to the programme were undergoing change, "Admission to the programme is currently administered by the CWDC [Children's Workforce Development Council]. From 2013 this will be administered by the Teaching Agency" (SETs mapping document, SET 2.1). The information provided also included reference to the programme website. To ensure potential applicants have all the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme the visitors require the education provider to update the website to clarify the arrangements in place for the administration of programme admissions.

Documentation and discussion indicated there were no policies for accreditation for prior learning (APL) available for the programme. The visitors considered this to be important information as it could influence an applicant's decision about whether to apply to the programme and so should be included in advertising materials.

Documentation provided indicated trainees would undergo an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. This check "is completed on entry to the programme, prior to any placement activity" (SETs mapping document, SET 2.3). The visitors considered that potential applicants to the programme should be aware of this information before applying to the programme.

The visitors noted the programme documentation included some inconsistencies in regards to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level needed for applicants whose first language is not English. There were references to the score being 7.5 (SETs mapping document, programme website materials) and 6.5 (programme specification document April 2012). The visitors confirmed with the programme team the required level was 7.5 and therefore require the education provider to revisit the documentation to ensure consistency.

In order to ensure this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to revise the programme documentation and the advertising materials to include the information as noted above and ensure this information will be provided to potential applicants as the management of programme admissions changes to the Teaching Agency.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate the admissions procedures consider health requirements and ensure potential applicants and trainees are fully aware of the requirements of the programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated admission processes for the programme did not directly include a check for any health requirements. Upon commencement of the programme trainees are required to sign a code of professional conduct and fitness to practise policy (Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology Programme Handbook 2011-2014, Appendix 4). Discussion indicated the programme team used this policy to ensure trainees would declare any health requirements that may need reasonable adjustments to be made or that could affect their performance on the programme. The visitors noted the admissions procedures did not take account of applicants' health requirements prior to the point of entry to the programme. The visitors also noted potential applicants were not informed of the programmes requirement to sign up to the code of professional conduct and fitness to practise policy prior to accepting an offer of a place on the programme. The visitors articulated admissions processes should consider applicants' health requirements and that before applying to the programme potential applicants should be made aware of programme requirements to adhere to the code of professional conduct and fitness to practise policy. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate the admissions procedures include consideration of applicants' health requirements and that demonstrates potential applicants and trainees are fully aware of the requirements of the programme.

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 formal system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: The visitors noted discussions with the programme team outlining how the quality assurance of placements is managed. The evidence provided in the SETs mapping document (for SETs 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9) and discussions at the visit, satisfied the visitors that the education provider ensures health and safety guidelines are followed at placements; that equality and diversity policies are checked; that placement supervisors at the placement setting are appropriately qualified, experienced, have relevant knowledge and skills, are appropriately registered; and that placement supervisors are checked to ensure they have undertaken appropriate training. The visitors were not however provided with documentary evidence to support these discussions.

The visitors noted strong collaborative links between the education provider and the practice placement providers, including regular visits to placements. It is through these meetings that placement suitability is assured and monitored. The visitors considered a formal documented process for quality assuring placements through the placement meetings would ensure all placements would be quality assured against the same criteria and would demonstrate a thorough and

effective system is in place. The visitors therefore require documentary evidence of a formal system for approving and monitoring all placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that at least one of the external examiners appointed to the programme will be HPC registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail regarding the registration status of an external examiner in the external examiner recruitment policy specific to the programme. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner arrangements for the programme but need to see evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation (such as the programme specification document and programme regulations) to demonstrate this standard continues to be met.

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 visitors recommend the education provider use the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students to strengthen trainees understanding of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were satisfied the learning outcomes and the assessment of the learning outcomes ensured trainees understood the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The visitors noted the programme has created a document which includes the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and the British Psychological Society (BPS) code of ethics in a framework for the trainees to use when considering how the programme develops them for professional practice (Programme Handbook Appendix 5: Professional proficiency and competence). The visitors felt the programme could strengthen trainees learning by making more direct reference to the HPC's Standards of conduct, performance and ethics and by utilising the HPC's Guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider should consider revisiting the programme documentation to further highlight information about the exit awards in place for the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation the programme regulations clearly articulate details about the exit awards available and that they would "not enable the candidate to register with the Health Professions Council nor practise as an educational psychologist" (Programme regulations). The visitors are therefore satisfied this standard is met. The visitors suggest information about the exit awards should be included in the programme documentation that students regularly use (programme handbooks) in order to strengthen students' awareness of the exit awards for the programme.

Judith Bamford
Allan Winthrop