

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University College London
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DclinPsych)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	18 -19 March 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 14 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 'Clinical 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 8 June 2010. At the Committee meeting on 7 July 2010, 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 psychologist 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, 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	Harry Brick (Practitioner Psychologist) Sabiha Azmi (Practitioner Psychologist) Margaret Curr (Physiotherapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Mandy Hargood
Proposed student numbers	42 per year
Initial approval	July 2009
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Dr Hilary Richards (University College London)
Members of the joint panel	Dr Chris McCusker (British Psychological Society) Dr Elizabeth Anderson (British Psychological Society) Lindsay McNair (British Psychological Society) Sally Anne Clarke (British Psychological Society) Lucy Kerry (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	<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 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 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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 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.

The visitors did not make any commendations on the programme.

Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The documentation received by the visitors prior to the visit stated that the education provider was working to ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed, by the end of April 2010. During the tour of facilities the visitors were shown the database where all information regarding practice placement educators was retained. This was a detailed system but as yet it did not contain information regarding the registration status of the practice placement educators. At the meeting with the programme team the visitors were informed that all practice placement educators were to be written to and asked for the information regarding their registration status. Also the programme team confirmed that only appropriately registered practice placement educators would be used. The visitors considered that this information was required to ensure that the education provider could be assured that they were using appropriately registered staff to supervise the trainees. Therefore the visitors would like to receive documentation that clearly sets out procedures as to how the education provider will ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless 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 that the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress is clearly specified.

Reason: In the documentation provided to visitors before the event there was information regarding the failure of the first practice placement. The documentation suggested that any placement failure was made up at the end of the programme, thereby extending the programme from three years to three years and six months. However, it was not clear if it was the whole placement that had to be retrieved if failed or just certain areas had to be retrieved to ensure that the trainee met all the relevant standards of proficiency for the programme. In the practice placement educators meeting it was obvious that the situation regarding failure had not arisen as any possible issues regarding a failing student were normally dealt with at an early stage such as at the mid placement review meetings between the trainee, practice placement educator and the trainee's

tutor. This was confirmed at the meeting with the programme team where it was said that if a placement in the first year was failed it would be retrieved as a whole at the end of the programme.

The visitors considered that whilst a failure on placement had not occurred, the documentation needed to clearly articulate how incidence of failure on practice placements would be dealt with. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation that clearly specifies the action to be taken in the case of failure in a practice placement.

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 clearly articulate within the assessment regulations that external examiners appointed to the programme must be on the relevant part of HPC's Register, unless alternate arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was detail regarding the appointment of external examiners, and that they would be HPC registered. However there was no evidence of this within the assessment regulations for the programme. The visitors were happy with the planned external examiner arrangements for the programme but would like to see evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiners on the programme have been included in the assessment regulations to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The programme team should consider revising the programme documentation to make sure that the International Language Testing System (IELTS) is at a consistent level across the programme documentation.

Reason: The visitors were happy that the admissions documentation was clear in stating the evidence of a good command of written, spoken and reading of English and that IELTS 7 was the level expected. In addition to the admissions documentation that applicants receive, they can view all the programme documentation prior to applying. However in places in the programme documentation IELTS 6 and 7 appeared to be interchangeable. The visitors wanted the programme team to be aware that consistency in the IELTS score should be clear in all documentation.

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Recommendation: The programme team should review the availability of IT facilities on campus.

Reason: Whilst the visitors were happy with the IT facilities available to trainees when on campus the visitors felt the facilities could be enhanced in terms of the availability of printing and computer terminals. Currently when the trainees are on campus the IT facilities in cluster rooms could possibly be booked for other teaching and this might hinder the preparation time for the trainees. Given the programme's laudatory reliance on web pages and email communication with stakeholders, the potential lack of computer access for trainees is a concern. The visitors recognised that the building has wireless connectivity and that most of the trainees have computers who can access the internet through this. However, they felt that in light of the fact the building is wireless and the majority of trainees have computers, a review of IT facilities could lead to enhancements in availability for trainees on 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.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider including the learning outcomes alongside the aims and objectives in the unit descriptors.

Reason: The visitors were content that there was evidence within the programme documentation which showed that the learning outcomes ensured those who successfully completed the programme would meet the standards of proficiency. However, the visitors felt that the learning outcomes could be more easily identified within the unit descriptors. This was because in addition to the information included in the unit descriptors (identified as objectives) there was

information about learning outcomes within other programme documentation. For example, during the tour the visitors were shown a database that was accessible to all trainees and clearly defined the learning outcomes for the programme. The visitors considered that by including this information directly into the unit descriptors articulation between the unit learning outcomes, assessment strategies and learning processes would facilitate the trainees' ability to meet the standards of proficiency

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

Recommendation: The programme team should consider adopting a responsive system to the data collected from the audits for the practice placements.

Reason: The visitors were happy with the auditing and monitoring system in place. However the visitors considered that the information collected and evaluated by the education provider could be more proactively used, and the relevant feedback to practice placement educators and managers reported via routine quality assurance channels. The visitors considered that by evaluating the audit information it would enhance and effective monitoring system already in place.

Harry Brick
Sabiha Azmi
Margaret Curr