hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Essex
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of delivery	Part time and Full time accelerated
Relevant part of HPC Register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	23-24 March 2010

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 14 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Occupational therapist' must be registered with us. The HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 8 June 2010. At the Committee meeting on 26 August 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 to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions and programme management and resources. The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider and validating reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration) (Full time), Post Graduate Diploma Occupational Therapy (pre-registration) (Full time) and BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy (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	Sarah Johnson (Occupational Therapist)
	Laura Graham (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	15
Initial approval	September 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	Part time - September 2010
	Full time accelerated – last graduation July 2010
Chair	Nigel South (University of Essex)
Secretary	Kirstie Sceats (University of Essex)
Members of the joint panel	Remy Reyes (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Claire Brewis (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Auldeen Alsop (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Timothy Dennis (Internal Panel Member)

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	☒	☐	☐
Resources Document	☒	☐	☐

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 47 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 10 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.

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

Conditions

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate the systems that are in place to manage the programme effectively.

Reason: From the programme documentation provided prior to the visit the information regarding evidence of regular monitoring and evaluation systems was not clear. Discussions at the visit revealed the programme was subject to regular monitoring and evaluation systems. The visitors were satisfied the programme had regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place which were not fully explained in the documentation provided. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the monitoring and evaluation systems in place (clarifications of the groups and committees involved at the programme level with details of what they do) to demonstrate the systems are in place and manage the programme effectively.

3.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must submit information regarding the named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme and provide their CV.

Reason: Discussions at the visit indicated there would be a change to the named programme leader provided in the documentation. Discussions revealed the named person would not be continuing in the position as programme leader for this programme and would be replaced by a new member of staff to be recruited at a later date. Details of the job description were provided to the visitors prior to the visit but at the time of the visit nobody had been recruited. The visitors therefore require information (such as a CV) about the new programme leader and their qualifications, experience and registration status.

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence of a programme for staff development to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Reason: From documentation provided prior to the visit it was clear the programme teaching staff adhered to the education provider wide staff development programme however, there was no specific evidence that the teaching staff for this programme were involved in any activities which would ensure their continuing professional and research development. Discussions at

the visit indicated activities were being undertaken and planned to be undertaken by teaching staff and the education provider played a part in encouraging this. Discussions at the visit indicated there would be an additional two new posts to be recruited for the profession specific team. The visitors require further information regarding the continuing professional and research development activities being undertaken and to be undertaken (such as a strategy or plan for existing and future staff development) and details of how the education provider plans to encourage this.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise and resubmit the programme documentation to ensure the consent form and associated processes used to gain consent are included within the programme documentation.

Reason: The programme documentation provided prior to the visit did not include any consent form or information on consent procedures. The visitors were satisfied there was a consent procedure in place which was not communicated through the programme documentation. The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation which includes a method of obtaining consent (such as a consent form) which covers instances when students could participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching through the programme, along with information about any associated processes used for when students opt-out.

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 education provider must revise and resubmit the programme documentation to identify the mandatory attendance requirements and the associated attendance policy for the programme.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit had only one section regarding attendance for the students. The section stated "students must attend all elements of university and practice modules" and identified that attendance would be monitored, recorded and the professional suitability process would deal with poor attendance (validation document p28). There was no further mention of attendance in the documentation. The visitors were unable to identify from this evidence the minimum requirements that were expected from students. Additionally the visitors were unable to identify any courses of action that would take place prior to the instigation of the professional suitability process (such as initial warnings, final warnings, interviews etc). The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation to identify the mandatory attendance requirements and the associated attendance policy for the programme.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revise and resubmit module descriptors which clearly articulate the taught content, learning outcomes and assessment of the learning outcomes to show how students who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency.

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit the visitors were unable to clearly identify where the learning outcomes that related to the standards of proficiency could be located within the programme. Discussions at the visit revealed there was taught and assessed content within the modules that was not indicated within the module descriptors. The visitors therefore require revised module descriptors to clearly articulate the taught content, learning outcomes and assessment of the learning outcomes to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must revise and resubmit the programme documentation to ensure there is explicit reference to the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: The documentation provided by the education provider made no explicit reference to the HPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics or the accompanying HPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students in the module descriptors. The programme documentation made it evident that conduct was an integral aspect of the taught curriculum but the specific HPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics were not referred to in the reading lists or module learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to be revised to include specific references to the HPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics and the accompanying HPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further documentation which demonstrates how it will ensure that the practice placement settings provide a safe environment.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit did not include any information about induction processes for students undertaken prior to a placement. Discussions at the visit indicated inductions were carried out which would ensure students were informed about risks, health and safety issues. The visitors were satisfied these were areas of concern for the education provider however require further evidence to demonstrate the inductions inform students

about risks and health and safety issues such as manual handling, physical risk from equipment, aggression (from service users, staff or students), emotional stress and working alone.

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 evidence that demonstrates how students and practice placement educators are informed about the timings and duration of placements, the expectations of professional conduct, the communication and lines of responsibility and the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress for all placements undertaken.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit did not make it clear how students and practice placement educators were informed about the timings and duration of placements, the expectations of professional conduct, the communication and lines of responsibility and the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress. Discussions at the visit with the students and programme team clarified the information was provided to placement educators and students. Discussions with the practice placement educators indicated the students were not fully aware of these areas for each placement attended. Discussions with the students and practice placement providers also indicated the parity of assessment across placements was ambiguous.

The visitors were satisfied that these were areas the education provider had considered however the students understanding that the placements are different and therefore require different understandings for each placement undertaken was not satisfactory. The visitors were satisfied the education provider made provision for the training regarding assessment however the difficulties and inconsistency in marking identified was not satisfactory. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence that these areas are more fully communicated to students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators so they are fully prepared for 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 specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register or propose alternative arrangements with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation provided there was insufficient detail regarding the appointment requirements for external examiners. The visitors were satisfied with the education provider wide assessment regulations however require evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiners on the programme have been included in the programme documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

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 education provider should consider ensuring more text books (especially core text books) are available through the electronic learning environment in place.

Reason: The visitors noted there was a system in place for acquiring text books online via an electronic learning environment. Discussions with the students indicated this was beneficial for students who were not able to easily access the library resources on site. The visitors noted that the amount of material available online did not cover a great deal of the recommended texts and especially the core text books and encourage the education provider to make more provision for these resources to be available online.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider strengthening their argument for practice placement providers to undertake the APPLE (Accredited Practice Placement Educators) training.

Reason: The visitors noted the education provider encourages all practice placement educators to undertake the APPLE training but few seem to take up the training. The College of Occupational Therapists accredits this training programme and it has benefits for the individual, the placement they work at and the education provider. APPLE gives professional recognition to the role of the Practice Placement Educator and establishes an accredited scheme that is transferable across regions. APPLE also supports HPC requirements for CPD activity through evidence of learning and application in the workplace. The visitors encourage the education provider to advertise the strengths and development opportunities this training programme has to the practice placement educators they work with in a more persuasive way.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should continue the collaborations between the education provider, practice placement provider and student in regards to the feedback processes in place.

Reason: From discussions at the visit with the practice placement provider it was evident that feedback processes had just been put in place which allowed the placement to gain feedback from the students. They stated they found this to be extremely beneficial and wished it to continue. The visitors encourage the education provider to continue with this process to ensure the placements continue to benefit from the feedback gained from students.

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Sarah Johnson
Laura Graham

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