

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Leeds
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsychol)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	22 -23 June 2010

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Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title '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 26 August 2010. At the Committee meeting on 16 February 2011, 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	Harry Brick (Clinical psychologist) David Packwood (Counselling psychologist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
HPC observer	Robert Smith
Proposed student numbers	18 per cohort once a year
Initial approval	1 October 1993
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 October 2010
Chair	Joan Maclean (University of Leeds)
Secretary	Bill Mathie (University of Leeds)
Members of the joint panel	Lucy Kerry (British Psychological Society) Rebecca Black (British Psychological Society) Steve Davies (British Psychological Society) Robert Jones (British Psychological Society) Eleanor Sutton (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"/>
Programme management information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Selection information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional academic-taught component and assessment information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Placement information	<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 ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 46 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 11 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

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme admissions documentation to include information regarding their accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms policies.

Reason: The admissions documentation provided prior to the visit made no mention of the procedures for accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms. Upon further discussions at the visit it became clear that the education provider did not accredit (experiential) learning or use other inclusion mechanisms for potential applicants to the programme. This information should be clearly communicated to potential applicants. For clarity for potential applicants the visitors require the programme admissions documentation to be revised to clearly include this information.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to include clear and correct references to the HPC.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation provided prior to the visit made little mention of the HPC. The visitors also noted there was an inaccuracy during a reference to the HPC – “The HPC expects that the threshold entry route to the register for Clinical Psychologist will be a professional doctorate, and undertakes regular approval visits of providers, including The University of Leeds.” (Introduction to the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, P2).

Discussions with the programme team indicated they were planning to incorporate references to the HPC into the taught academic content but had not yet done so. The profession has been statutory regulated by the HPC since July 2009 and as such, information about the HPC needs to be clearly articulated for all trainees. The reference to the HPC is incorrect in that the appropriate wording is - “The Council normally expects that the threshold entry routes to the Register will be the following:” (Standards of education and training - SET 1.1).

The visitors therefore require revised programme documentation which demonstrates clear and correct references to the HPC, to reflect the current landscape of statutory regulation and so facilitate the trainees understanding of the HPC in all supporting resources used for the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate all aspects of the student complaints process in place.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit provided a high level overview of the student complaints process which started with the formal initiation of the student complaints procedure. Discussions with the trainees highlighted they were aware of this high level process but were uncertain if there were any procedures which allowed them to contact the programme team to discuss any problems on an informal basis prior to initiating the complaints procedure.

Discussions with the programme team indicated they expected any problems to be highlighted with them informally through meetings with various affected parties prior to the initiation of the complaints procedure as a matter of course. The informal meetings to discuss and perhaps resolve the problems prior to initiating the complaints procedure are important for all parties involved. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation to include information for the trainees about any informal opportunities in place to discuss complaints with the programme team without initiating the formal complaints procedure.

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 revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate all aspects of the consent protocols in place.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included the student contract which is given to trainees at the beginning of the programme. Signing this contract was compulsory for access to the programme. The programme documentation did not provide any further information about consent or 'opting out'. Discussions with the programme team indicated they were fully aware of issues that could arise during the programme and had measures in place to turn to if students were unwilling to participate in particular areas of the programme (particular lectures, sessions, etc). The measures discussed were those such as private meetings to discuss the issues, additional support for trainees, extended reading materials provided and there was reference to additional measures not discussed.

The visitors were satisfied in regards to the consent protocol to be followed at the beginning of the programme. The visitors were not satisfied enough information was provided for the trainees regarding the approach to issues arising from specific areas of the teaching. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation to include information for the trainees regarding the approaches to be taken to issues arising from their personal concerns about specific areas of the teaching.

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 include references to the HPC's standards of conduct performance and ethics in all relevant programme documentation.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation provided prior to the visit made no mention of the HPC's standards of conduct performance and ethics. Discussions with the programme team indicated they were planning to incorporate it along with references to the HPC into the taught academic content but had not yet done so. The profession has been statutory regulated by the HPC since July 2009 and as such, information about the HPC and the standards need to be clearly articulated for all trainees.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that the programme documentation includes specific references to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics wherever it is deemed appropriate to reflect the standards being taught within the programmes content in order to facilitate students understanding of the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to show how they ensure placement supervisors have undertaken appropriate initial and refresher training.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors judged that it was not clear how the education provider ensured that placement supervisors had undertaken appropriate training prior to working with trainees or continued to undertake any secondary training once working with trainees. In discussions with the programme team, it became evident that the programme team expected placement supervisors to be initially trained and to undertake follow up training but did not make it mandatory and they did not monitor training attendance.

The visitors were aware there are difficulties in ensuring all placement supervisors are initially trained and then have undertaken follow up training. The initial training would be to prepare placement supervisors to work with trainees and secondary 'refresher' training would enable the education provider to keep placement supervisors up to date with any changes to the programme and refresh their skills at working with trainees.

It is the education provider's responsibility to ensure appropriate training of some kind – either run by the education provider directly, run by external organisations or by other education providers using the same placements, has taken place and is monitored. Therefore, the visitors require that the education provider provides further evidence to show how this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to show how they ensure placement supervisors are appropriately registered or agree other arrangements.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors judged that it was not clear how the education provider ensured that placement supervisors were appropriately registered or arranged other agreements. In discussions with the programme team, it became evident that the programme team expected placement supervisors to be registered but did not make it a mandatory requirement and they did not monitor the registrations of placement supervisors.

It is the responsibility of the education provider to ensure placement supervisors are appropriately registered or agree other arrangements. Therefore, the visitors require that the education provider provides further evidence to show how this standard will be met.

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 documentation which clearly outlines how the learning outcomes for placements are consistently assessed.

Reason: The clinical placement documentation provided prior to the visit included the forms which placement supervisors fill in to assess trainee's competencies (Placement Assessment Form). This form used a grading system of 1-5 to indicate how proficient the trainee was at each competency. The visitors were satisfied the competencies assessed were appropriate but noted there was no guidance criteria which would differentiate between grades (for example what equals a grade of 3 as opposed to a 4). The visitors also noted there were no mandatory requirements for placement supervisors to attend any training prior to working with trainees or refresher training which could deal with this concern.

The visitors were not satisfied different placement supervisors would all use the same criteria to grade a trainee without any clear grade descriptors for the competencies or any mandatory initial or refresher training. The visitors therefore require further evidence which clearly articulates how the education provider ensures learning outcomes for each placement are consistently assessed.

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 documentation which clearly outlines how individual placement supervisors are fully prepared for each individual placement.

Reason: The clinical placement documentation provided detailed meetings for placements as a Placement Planning Meeting (PPM), a Mid Placement Visit (PMV) and an End of Placement Visit (EPV). The EPV was where the placement was discussed between the trainee and clinical supervisor and the next placement was to be discussed. The trainee then takes a self appraisal profile to the PPM which is held between the clinical tutor and the trainee. It is here that goals for the next placement are addressed. It then falls solely to the trainee to take this information forward with their new placement supervisor.

Discussions with the trainees and placements supervisors confirmed that prior to the placement there was no information which passed to the new placement supervisor regarding trainees apart from that passed on by the trainees themselves. Discussions with the trainees and placements supervisors also highlighted that the self appraisal profile was used in varying ways and sometimes not at all. Discussions with the trainees and placements supervisors additionally highlighted that it was only if there was a serious concern about a particular learning outcome that the education provider would become involved to alert placements at an early stage.

The visitors noted that there was a risk of trainees failing to alert placement supervisors to their developmental needs and in these circumstances it would only be at the MPV that significant areas which need attention would be highlighted by the education provider. The visitors considered that to ensure all learning outcomes are addressed fully and in order to be fully prepared for placements, there must be some prior knowledge of the trainee before the placement starts (such as a mechanism which passes feedback between placement supervisors). The visitors therefore require further evidence which clearly articulates how the education provider ensures individual placement supervisors are fully prepared for each individual placement.

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.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to include information regarding the exit award policy in place.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit made no mention of additional exit awards the programme could lead to. Upon further discussions at the visit it became clear that the education provider did not use exit awards for this programme. This information should be communicated to students. For clarity for the students the visitors require the programme documentation to be revised to clearly include this information.

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 revisit the programme documentation to include information regarding the aegrotat award policy in place.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit made no mention of procedures for aegrotat award policies. Upon further discussions at the visit it became clear that the education provider did not use aegrotat awards for this programme. This information should be communicated to students. For clarity for the students the visitors require the programme documentation to be revised to clearly include this information.

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 external examiners appointed to the programme must be HPC registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: In the programme documentation submitted prior to the visit there was no mention of the arrangements for the recruitment for the post of external examiner for the programme. The visitors were satisfied the external examiner at the time of the visit fulfilled this standard but for clarity require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to include clear reference to the external examiner procedures following this standard of education and training.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should continue with their exploration into providing external clinical psychologists to mentor trainees.

Reason: Discussions at the visit indicated trainees did not have dedicated personal tutors; instead they were encouraged to approach any member of the programme team if they needed to. The trainees and staff indicated that they were happy with this arrangement. The programme team also indicated they were considering bringing in external clinical psychologists to act as mentors to trainees on the programme. The visitors wish to support this endeavour and appreciate the additional support and expertise this would bring for trainees.

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the coordination between the education provider and NHS trust.

Reason: The programme falls under both the education provider and the NHS Trust personnel policies and procedures. The visitors are aware that this may cause problems when there is more than one specific policy acting on the programme at once (e.g. conduct and discipline policies). The conflicts this could cause may pose significant concerns. The visitors wish to recommend that the education provider review how they manage the coordination between the education provider and the NHS Trust to ensure processes and outcomes run smoothly.

4.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reducing the sizes of the reflective practice groups used during the teaching of personal professional development.

Reason: Discussions at the visit indicated the reflective practice group used during the teaching of personal professional development consisted of the entire cohort at once – 18 trainees. Discussions with the trainees indicated some were not happy with the large size of the group which meant that not everyone had a chance to be active participants in the group work. The visitors considered this to be a very large number for reflective practice groups and were concerned about the group dynamics. They considered that in large groups some individuals would naturally dominate and some would naturally become more passive and felt passive learning does not easily facilitate reflective learning. The visitors wish to recommend the education provider reconsider the size they use for these groups and perhaps convert the one group into two or three smaller groups.

Harry Brick
Dave Packwood