hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Sheffield
Programme name	Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology (DEdCPsy)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Educational psychologist
Date of visit	24 – 25 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 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	Peter Branston (Educational psychologist)
	Trevor Holme (Educational psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Lewis Roberts
Proposed student numbers	10 per cohort
First approved intake	January 2005
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2012
Chair	Jerry Wellington (University of Sheffield)
Secretary	Ann Whorton (University of Sheffield)
Members of the joint panel	Jane Turner (British Psychological Society)
	Dilanthi Weerasinghe (British Psychological Society)
	Laura Cockburn (British Psychological Society)
	Yvonne Walker (British Psychological Society)
	Rupal Nathwani (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	☒	☐	☐

The HPC did not review descriptions of modules prior to the visit as the programme is not based around a modular structure.

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 all programme documentation including website and paper advertising materials, to clearly highlight the potential distances students may be required to travel when attending placements and any additional personal costs associated with taking up a place on the programme.

Reason: Through discussions with students the visitors noted the distances students may be required to travel when attending placements could be significant and that students are required to self-fund the costs associated with attending placement. The visitors also noted discussions with the programme team where it was stated students cover costs associated with completing a criminal conviction check. From a review of the programme documentation the visitors were unable to determine where applicants and students would find out about the logistical arrangements associated with placements, including information about the potential distances students may be required to travel when attending placements. The visitors were also unable to determine where applicants and students would find out about costs associated with criminal record checks.

This lack of information about likely placement locations and subsequent costs associated with taking up a place on the programme may mean applicants cannot make an informed decision about whether to take up a place on the programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation, including all advertising materials, to clearly highlight the potential distances students may be required to travel when attending placements, any additional personal costs associated with attending placements and costs associated with criminal conviction checks.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) entry criteria are clear and if necessary provide evidence that demonstrates how the programme will ensure those who successfully complete the programme will be able to meet SOP 1b.3.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted the IELTS level for entry on to the programme was 6.5. At the visit the programme team stated the level was going to change to 7. If students enter the programme with an IELTS score of 6.5 the visitors require evidence of how the programme team ensures that upon successful completion of the programme a student will be able to meet standard of proficiency 1b.3 (be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language

Testing System, with no element below 6.5) However, if the programme team change the level required for admission then the visitors require the IELTS entry level to the programme to be clarified and clearly stated in the programme documentation and advertising materials.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and outline a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: From a review of the documentation the visitors found no evidence of a formal system for approving and monitoring placements. The visitors were made aware of a number of informal mechanisms that were in place to audit and monitor practice placements. The visitors noted discussions with the programme team where it was stated that all placements would be contacted and visited by a member of the programme team and the Fieldwork Placement Information Form would be used as a framework to ensure placements are safe and supportive. However, the visitors did not have enough evidence from the documentation provided, to demonstrate a thorough and effective system is in place for the approval and monitoring of placements. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the education providers auditing process along with any policies and procedures used to support the approval and monitoring of all placements settings.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice educator training prior to working with students.

Reason: Documentation and discussions at the visit indicated there were arrangements for training sessions held for practice placement educators on this programme. In discussion at the visit it was indicated that it was expected practice placement educators undertake the training prior to working with students. The visitors also noted discussions with the programme team where it was stated practice placement educators who had undertaken supervisory training with other education providers would be able to supervise students from the University of Sheffield. The visitors were concerned practice placement educators could supervise students without programme specific knowledge and understanding of the way the programme delivers the curriculum and covers the standards of proficiency. The visitors therefore require evidence that demonstrates that all practice placement educators undertake appropriate and programme specific practice educator training prior to working with students.

Recommendations

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider further enhancing the involvement of service users in teaching and learning activities.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors noted some good examples of where service users have been involved in teaching activities within the programme. The visitors noted that individual members of the programme team had facilitated sessions involving service users. The visitors recommend the education provider may want to further enhance the involvement of service users in teaching and learning activities and take a more joined-up approach to service user engagement across the programme. Approaches might include involving service users within admissions processes, in teaching and learning activity, assessment of student performance and influencing curriculum design.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the placement audit processes to record further evidence and action plan areas for development.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted the Fieldwork Placement Information Form that is used as an audit tool and covers issues such as health and safety. The visitors noted it contains a number of yes or no questions and does not give scope to record detailed audit information. The visitors also noted that there is no guidance in place to outline what is acceptable evidence and what constitutes non-compliance. The visitors finally noted the Fieldwork Placement Information Form gives limited scope to record information about the practice placement educator. The visitors recommend the education provider should consider reviewing the placement audit processes to record further evidence, action plan areas for development and record greater detail about the practice placement educator's knowledge, skills and experience. The visitors noted that the education provider may want to consider using the standards of education and training in SET 5 as an audit framework.

Peter Branston
Trevor Holme