health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
Programme name	Post Graduate Certificate in Practitioner Health Psychology
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Health psychologist
Date of visit	1 – 2 February 2011

Contents

2
3
3
ŀ
5
5
ŀ

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 'Health 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 12 May 2011. At the Committee meeting on 9 June 2011, the programme was approved. 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. 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 education provider validated the programme. The visit also considered the 'Post Graduate Diploma in Practitioner Forensic Psychology' programme. The education provider 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. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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 education provider, outlines their decisions on the programmes' status.

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Ewan Gillon (Health and Counselling Psychologist) Peter Branston (Educational
	Psychologist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	25 per cohort shared with the 'Post Graduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology' programme once a year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2011
Chair	Peter Treadwell (University of Wales Institute, Cardiff)
Secretary	Chris George ((University of Wales Institute, Cardiff)
Members of the joint panel	Paul Bennett (External Panel Member)
	Ruth Matheson (Internal Panel Member)

Visit details

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	\square		
Descriptions of the modules	\boxtimes		
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	\boxtimes		
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	\boxtimes		
Practice placement handbook	\bowtie		
Student handbook	\boxtimes		
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	\boxtimes		
External examiners' reports from the last two years			\boxtimes
Miscellaneous programme information as provided by education provider	\square		

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit, there are no past external examiners' reports because the programme is new.

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	\boxtimes		
Programme team	\boxtimes		
Placements providers and educators/mentors	\boxtimes		
Students	\boxtimes		
Learning resources	\boxtimes		
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	\boxtimes		

The HPC met with past and current students from the MSc Health Psychology and MSc Forensic Psychology programmes, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 48 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 9 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for 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 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.

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 programme team must revise the advertising materials and joining instructions for this programme to include information regarding expected programme costs and accreditation for prior (experiential) learning (APEL) policies for the programme.

Reason: The advertising materials and joining instructions for the programme provided prior to the visit did not include APEL policies or give details of expected programme costs for students.

In discussion with the programme team it was apparent that there was additional information that potential applicants were not informed of which could impact on their decision whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme or not. It was discussed with the programme team that the programme does not use APEL policies. A students' past learning is looked at to ensure they meet the criteria for entry to the programme only; they can not use prior learning to exempt themselves from any part of the programme content. The expectations of programme costs were also discussed, it was not expected that the student buys all text books (this is left to students discretion), however transport to and from placements and arranging overnight stays at placements further afield was expected. The bench fee for this programme had not yet been calculated and so it was not possible to include this in the advertising materials provided prior to the visit.

The visitors considered information about APEL, expected costs, transport and accommodation and bench fees to be important for any potential applicant looking to study on this programme. The visitors therefore require revised advertising materials and joining information to clearly articulate this information for potential applicants.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The programme team must provide details of contingency plans in place for the circumstance that the programme needs to be withdrawn.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the education provider had been planning for this programme for some time; the department has been intending to grow and develop as detailed in the Programme Justification document. Discussions at the visit indicated they were hopeful for this programme and were also aware that they needed viable numbers of students in order for it to run; research undertaken indicated there would be enough persons interested in the programme to ensure its viability for the first cohort. The visitors are aware that in the present economical climate it may be difficult to find students or placements for subsequent cohorts and so may be necessary for the education provider to reconsider running this programme. Discussions with the programme team indicated they had had preliminary discussions about contingency plans but not formalised any arrangements. The visitors are concerned that if the programme ever needs to be withdrawn, students on the programme may be left uncatered for and without support in place to continue their studies. The visitors therefore require details of contingency plans in place to ensure the programme team have considered the implications for students on the programme if they ever needed to manage such an occurrence as programme withdrawal.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The programme team must provide details of the committee structures in place for this programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit gave details of the committees in place for the currently running MSc Health Psychology programmes. Discussions at the visit with the programme team indicated they had not yet formally planned the layout of the committees for this programme but they anticipated the programme committees running similarly to, or with, the MSc Health Psychology programmes. The visitors consider effective committees to be central to the management and maintenance of the programme. In order to be sure the programme will be effectively managed the visitors require details of all committees planned for this programme including their interactions (with each other and the programme), the expected attendees, their role and remit (terms of reference) and the frequency of which they are held.

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

Condition: The programme team must clearly articulate the alternative options for when students decide to 'opt out' of giving consent to participating in role plays or interaction.

Reason: The documentation submitted for this programme included a consent form which needed to be signed by the student for when they were required to participate in role-play or interaction ("sharing of experiences, discussion, observation and feedback" (Document 8: E Role Play and Shared Learning Consent Form)) as the programme demanded. The advert for the programme stated that if a student would be unable to consent to such activities the programme team would work together to "achieve a suitable alternative experience" (Document 8: G Advert for Health). Discussion with the programme team disclosed that the alternative to meeting the learning outcomes through role-play or interaction would be to meet them in real service user situations at placement. The visitors considered this to be pertinent information for the students and therefore require the programme team to revise the adverts and consent forms to clearly articulate the alternative options available for when

students decide to 'opt out' of giving consent to the use of role plays and interaction.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further documentation regarding the approval and monitoring of all placements and revised programme documentation that clearly articulates placement approval and monitoring processes for all parties involved.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated to be eligible to enrol on the programme, students must have secured a practice placement (Programme Specification, p9). The documentation did not provide any evidence of how a placement is initially approved by the education provider. Discussions at the visit with the programme team indicated that a 'skills audit' would be carried out to assess the suitability of the placement before agreeing the placement would be used. The placement documentation (Placement Student Handbook and Placement Supervisors Handbook) did not mention the 'skills audit' or how it is used by the programme team with placement providers and students.

Programme documentation did not provide any details of how the placement would be monitored once the initial 'skills audit' had been undertaken. The programme team indicated that the monitoring of the placements would be undertaken at the regular meetings to be held throughout the placement (4 times a year). These regular meetings would be held between the student, the placement supervisor and the academic supervisor and focus on the supervisory log which contained learning outcomes to be met by the student on placement. From documentation provided prior to the visit and discussions at the visit it was unclear whether separate ongoing monitoring of the placement environments occurred.

The visitors considered that if the 'skills audit' was used as discussed, it could be an effective method of initially approving placements. The visitors felt additionally it could be used as a way to continually monitor the placements (either alongside the regular meetings through placement or as a separate process carried out regularly) to ensure placement suitability is maintained and records of both the approval and monitoring of placement are held. The visitors considered information about the 'skills audit' to be necessary for the placement providers, students and programme team to understand its management and its function and therefore programme documentation should include information about the 'skills audit'.

Because the visitors have not seen the 'skills audit' that was discussed or information regarding its application, they require further information about the 'skills audit' used to ensure its appropriateness. The visitors also require evidence that a system for ongoing monitoring of placements will be established. Additionally the visitors require revised documentation that clearly articulates the use of the 'skills audit' and information of the placement approval and monitoring processes in place for all parties involved in placement.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The programme team must provide further documentation regarding how they ensure an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff is present at the practice placement setting and revised documentation that clearly articulates how suitability of placement staff is reviewed.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated to be eligible to enrol on the programme, students must have secured a practice placement (Programme Specification, p9). The documentation did not provide any evidence of how the programme team ensure the placement has an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Discussions at the visit with the programme team indicated that a 'skills audit' would be carried out to assess the suitability of the placement before agreeing the placement would be used, including the suitability of the staff present at the placement by assessing their training needs. The placement documentation (Placement Student Handbook and Placement Supervisors Handbook) did not mention the 'skills audit' or how it is used by the programme team with placement providers and students.

The visitors considered that if the 'skills audit' was used as discussed, it could be an effective method of initially approving placements and ensuring the qualifications and experience of staff at placement. The visitors felt additionally it could be used as a way to continually monitor the placements to ensure that if staff changes occur there would be no impact upon the student's learning. The visitors considered information about the 'skills audit' to be necessary for the placement providers, students and programme team to understand its management and its function and therefore programme documentation should include information about the 'skills audit'.

Because the visitors have not seen the 'skills audit' that was discussed or information regarding its application, they require further information about the 'skills audit' used to ensure its appropriateness. The visitors also require evidence that the programme team are ensuring there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting. Additionally the visitors require revised documentation that clearly articulates how placement staff are reviewed using the 'skills audit' for all parties involved in placement.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Condition: The programme team must provide further documentation regarding how they ensure practice placement clinical supervisors have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience and revised documentation that clearly articulates how suitability of placement staff is reviewed.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated to be eligible to enrol on the programme, students must have secured a practice placement

(Programme Specification, p9). The documentation did not provide any evidence of how the programme team ensure the practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Discussions at the visit with the programme team indicated that a 'skills audit' would be carried out to assess the suitability of the placement before agreeing the placement would be used, including suitability of the staff present at the placement by looking at their training needs. The placement documentation (Placement Student Handbook and Placement Supervisors Handbook) did not mention the 'skills audit' or how it is used by the programme team with placement providers and students.

The visitors considered that if the 'skills audit' was used as discussed, it could be an effective method of initially approving placements and ensuring the knowledge, skills and experience of staff at placement. The visitors felt additionally it could be used as a way to continually monitor the placements to ensure that if staff changes occur there would be no impact upon the student's learning. The visitors considered information about the 'skills audit' to be necessary for the placement providers, students and programme team to understand its management and its function and therefore programme documentation should include information about the 'skills audit'.

Because the visitors have not seen the 'skills audit' that was discussed or information regarding its application, they require further information about the 'skills audit' used to ensure its appropriateness. The visitors require evidence that the programme team are ensuring placement supervisors have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Additionally the visitors require revised documentation that clearly articulates how placement staff are reviewed using the 'skills audit' for all parties involved in placement.

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

Condition: The programme team must ensure placement supervisors have undertaken mandatory initial training prior to working with students and ensure they will undertake refresher training as appropriate.

Reason: Documentation received prior to the visit stated that the placement supervisor would be offered "access to appropriate training (based on their qualifications and experience) for supervising trainee health psychologists" (Placement Student Handbook, p3). The supervisors were invited to attend the programme introductory workshop (Workshop 1: Introduction to Certificate and assessment & Professional Practice) which is the first workshop for students introducing them to the programme. There was no additional information regarding separate training for supervisors.

Discussions at the visit with the programme team confirmed that they offered training and the programme team expected mandatory attendance although they admitted this requirement was not clearly stated. Documentation provided and discussions with the programme team indicated there was no regular refresher training to be held for practice supervisors. The visitors considered training prior to taking students from the programme to be essential to ensure the student placement experience is appropriately managed by the placement supervisor

and that they are trained appropriately for the role expected of them. The visitors also considered ongoing refresher training to be necessary in order to keep the placement supervisor informed as to updates and changes to the programme and to refresh their skills at working with trainees.

It is the programme teams' responsibility to ensure appropriate training of some kind – either run by the education provider directly or run by external training bodies, has taken place and is monitored. Therefore the visitors require further documentation of how the programme team plan to ensure placement supervisors have undertaken mandatory initial training prior to working with students and how they plan to ensure they will undertake refresher training as appropriate.

- 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 programme team must clearly identify how consistent standards of assessment are maintained across placement supervisors.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included the Placement Supervisor Handbook gave information regarding the assessment of students at placement. The criterion for rating competencies is a score of 1 - 3. Training is offered to placement supervisors dependant on their qualifications and experience and they are invited to attend the programme introductory workshop (Workshop 1: Introduction to Certificate and assessment & Professional Practice), the first workshop for students introducing them to the programme. There was no additional information regarding separate training for placement supervisors looking at assessment. The Placement Supervisor handbook stated that there would be "moderation meetings" for all placement supervisors which would be held annually to review "a range of portfolios and develop their [placement supervisors] understanding of the assessment process" (Placement Supervisor Handbook p9). There was no additional information as to the format of these meetings, their content or the managing of attendance.

The visitors are concerned that without the assurance of being certain the placement supervisors are trained appropriately in how to formulate assessments of students competencies, the level of assessment undertaken across the placements may be varied in terms of consistent use of ratings. In order to be fully prepared to undertake the work with students, placement supervisors must be aware of the learning outcomes to be achieved, expectations of professional conduct and the assessment procedures and it is the programme team's responsibility to ensure placement supervisors are consistent in their use of the

rating of competencies across placements especially in regard to failing placements.

The visitors require evidence how the programme team ensures placement supervisors are fully prepared for placement and understand the learning outcomes to be achieved, expectations of professional conduct and assessment procedures and that consistent standards of assessment are maintained across placements.

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 - the learning outcomes to be achieved;
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 - 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 programme team must revise programme documentation to clearly articulate assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit cited the Programme Handbook, the Placement Student Handbook and the Placement Supervisor Handbooks as the main sources of information regarding assessment on placement (SETs mapping document, SET 5.11). There was a procedure detailed to contact the academic supervisor and programme director when it was found that the student was "not competent and is failing to develop towards [the] competency" (Placement Student Handbook, p5). The Programme Handbook indicated when a pass or a fail was awarded, "A fail will evidence that: a student has not demonstrated competency in one or more areas listed in appendix 2 [the supervisory log] and/or has failed on the performance items of the supervisory log." The documentation did not state any other processes or procedures that came into play when placements were failing or failed. The documents stated that all the assessments needed to be passed in order to be awarded the final award, there was no mention of assessment in terms of the number of re-takes the student could have (Programme Handbook, p20).

Discussions with the programme team indicated that the academic supervisor and the placement supervisor would both be present at regular meetings to assess the supervisory log and to give ratings. It was discussed that if there was a disagreement over a rating between the academic supervisor, the placement supervisor or the student then additional processes would be initiated. An internal moderation and then an external moderation using external examiners would take place to identify the correct rating. The student then would have the option of appealing the decision. These arrangements were not described in the programme documentation. It was also discussed with the programme team that there was a designated amount of time in which the practice portfolio would need to be completed in, during this designated timeframe the student could continue to work at meeting the competencies. If by the end of the timeframe the student had been unable to meet all competencies they would not be awarded the final award.

The visitors considered this information to be important for students to fully understand the implications and the procedures when placements are failed or if there are disagreements surrounding the assessment of placements. For clarity for students and placement supervisors the visitors require this information to be clearly articulated in the placement documentation.

- 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 programme team must ensure there are clear mechanisms in place to deal with complaints at both the education provider and practice placement level and ensure the interactions of the complaints procedures at both levels are clearly articulated in placement documentation for students and placement supervisors.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit identified the education providers' fitness to practice policy which deals with issues arising from students' health and conduct in addition to how they meet the learning outcomes. Discussion at the visit with the programme team indicated that along with the education provider policies the students would be held liable by the policies at the practice placement. The visitors were concerned that if there were any complaints or grievances raised whilst the student was on placement (either by the student or by the clinical supervisor) it was not clear which policy would be used and how the policies would interact with each other if one or the other policies reached a resolution that differed from the other. The visitors therefore require further evidence that the programme team has ensured there are clear mechanisms in place to ensure complaints are dealt with effectively by both education provider and practice placement provider levels and that this information is clearly articulated for placement providers and students in placement documentation.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider including further information about the application process for potential applicants in advertising materials.

Reason: The advertising materials provided prior to the visit contained a lot of programme specific information such as entry criteria, the structure of the programme and assessment details. There was discussion at the visit with the programme team regarding the admissions processes and information given in joining instructions (interviews, CRB checks, occupational health checks). With the understanding that the programme team would meet the condition placed against this standard the visitors felt happy with this standard being met however they felt that some additional information could be communicated earlier through programme advertising materials. In particular regarding the application interview processes for potential applicants so they are fully aware of all the steps in the application process rather than only once an application has been made and joining instructions have been sent.

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

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider revising their academic and pastoral student support system.

Reason: Documentation and discussions at the visit indicated each student would be allocated a member of staff as their tutor for both academic and pastoral problems. The visitors were happy that this standard was met with the academic and personal tutor being the same person however felt there was the possibility that students might not want to see the same person for both academic and personal concerns. The visitors suggest allocating students two tutors – one an academic tutor and one a personal tutor, further encouraging students to approach tutors with issues and concerns applicable to their roles. In this way the visitors feel the academic and support systems used by the programme would be better served to their purpose.

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider revising programme documentation when referencing the complaints procedures.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included detailed information about all of the complaints procedures in place (for both academic and non-academic concerns). The visitors were happy that this standard was met

from this information provided. Discussions with the students from the MSc Health Psychology programme indicated there was some confusion between the academic complaints and the non-academic complaints processes. For this new programme the visitors recommend the programme team revisit the documentation to make it clearer as to the types of concerns that feed into the different complaints procedures (fitness to practice, appeals process, student complaints). The visitors feel this clarity could be beneficial to students on the programme.

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

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider implementing a formal signed agreement between the education provider and placement provider(s).

Reason: Currently the placements for this programme are arranged through contact from members of the programme team. The practice portfolio is the signed document between the student, placement supervisor and academic supervisor to look at how the competencies are being met on placement. There is no other signed agreement between placement providers and the education provider. The visitors recommend the programme team investigate implementing a formal, signed agreement for the practice placements, and the education provider, which clearly states the expectation of the roles of both parties. This would limit confusion regarding the expectation of each role involved in placement and additionally act as a safeguard against the placement provider or education provider being able to suddenly withdraw from offering the placement or the student.

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 programme team could consider reviewing the MSc Health Psychology programme documentation to ensure it is clearly articulated that the programme does not lead to eligibility to apply for HPC registration.

Reason: The documentation for this programme clearly articulates that only those who successfully complete the programme will be granted the final award and eligibility to apply for HPC registration. The visitors are aware that the entry requirements for this programme state an applicant must have completed the education providers' MSc Health Psychology programme or another British Psychological Society accredited MSc programme. The visitors wish to recommend the programme team ensure it is clearly articulated that the education providers' MSc Health Psychology programme alone will not grant eligibility to apply for HPC Registration.

Ewan Gillon Peter Branston