Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Infection Sciences)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	17 – 18 October 2012

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'biomedical scientist' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care 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 14 February 2013. At the Committee meeting on 14 February 2013 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 HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC 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 reviewed the programme, a Department of Health Modernising Scientific Careers (DoH MSC) Team considered their accreditation of the programme, and the professional body (the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)) considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Blood Sciences), BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Cellular Sciences) and BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Sciences). The education provider, the professional body, the DoH MSC team, and the HCPC 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 HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider, the DoH MSC team, and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	William Gilmore (biomedical scientist) Mary MacDonald (biomedical scientist)
HCPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Jamie Hunt
HCPC observers	Brendon Edmonds Abdur Razzaq
Proposed student numbers	30 (across all provisions)
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Paul Thomas (Cardiff Metropolitan University)
Secretary	Kathryn Livesey (Cardiff Metropolitan University)
Members of the joint panel	Darren Mernagh (External Panel Member) Caroline Ritchie (Internal Panel Member) Ray Ponting (Internal Panel Member)

	Chris George (observer) Julie McLeod (DoH MSC team) Nicky Fleming (DoH MSC team) Neil Formstone (DoH MSC team) Osama Ammar (DoH MSC team) Jo Nightingale (DoH MSC team) Wendy Leversuch (IBMS) Sarah Pitt (IBMS) Alan Wainright (IBMS) Jill Rodney (IMBS)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC 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	☐	☐	☒
Navigation tools for the teams	☒	☐	☐
Background information on the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme documentation	☒	☐	☐
Placement management information	☒	☐	☐
Training manuals	☒	☐	☐
School information	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC did not review the external examiner's reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

During the visit the HCPC 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)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with current and past students from the currently approved programme BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme and several other programmes in the department, 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 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 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 did not make any 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.

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 ensure that applicants have sufficient information about the different specialism pathways so they can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitor noted that while the programme will be advertised as BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science this is not the title of any of the programmes which lead to eligibility for registration with the HPC. Instead this is the generic title of a suite of programmes. The programme is structured so that all students take an identical first year, and will then specialise in years two and three. Availability of specialisms will depend on the Welsh Assembly Government's annual work force planning, and therefore students may need to compete for places on the four specialism routes, and in some years certain specialisms may not be available. The timing of the workforce planning may mean that students will not know the areas that they can specialise in, or numbers of available places until after they have enrolled on the programme. From discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that students would be given information about this at the interview stage, but were concerned that this information is not reflected clearly enough in information for applicants and students. On page 5 of the 'Information for Students' leaflet, there is information about 'allocation' of specialism, but it is unclear that this allocation leads to a specific award title, and potentially a career path. There is also limited information in the Programme Specification document, for example section 16 (Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credits and award requirements) states that there is work based learning in years two and three of the programme, and lists the specialisms, but does not make a link to the competition for places, the award title or to the expected career path of a graduate. This information is repeated on page 8 of the Student Programme Handbook.

In light of this information, the visitors were not satisfied this standard was being met. The visitors require further evidence of the information available to potential applicants of the programme which clearly informs them of pathways available through the programme. In particular, any evidence provided should highlight the influencers affecting which pathway and specialism a student might be able to take and the impact of specialising within a pathway upon a students' final award and their subsequent career path.

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 review the programme documentation to make clear that upon successful completion of the programme the individual will be eligible to apply for registration as a biomedical scientist with the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors found inconsistent advice about registration with the HCPC in the programme documentation, and what regulation means to a registrant. For example, there were several references in the documentation to 'registration with the Heath and

Care Professions Council', but not specifically as a biomedical scientist. To an applicant, this may cause confusion as they may not have experience with professional regulation. To be satisfied this SET is met, the visitors require the programme documentation to be revised to make explicit which part of the Register graduates are eligible to apply to.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the documentation to ensure references to the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE) and the Guidance on conduct and ethics for students documents are consistent.

Reason: The visitors noted that the guidance on conduct and ethics for students document was referenced in the programme documentation, but that it was referred to inconsistently. For example, page 12 of the Student Programme Handbook refers to the 'HCPC Code of Conduct and Ethics for Students' but the required reading for Module AP S5022 (Professional Practice & Work-based Training A) refers to the 'HCPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'. Although the Guidance on conduct performance and ethics for students is mentioned in the documentation (for example, the 'Fitness to Practice Procedures' section of the programme handbook), the SCPE document is not directly referred in the documentation. The visitors require the programme documentation to be amended to refer to these documents correctly and consistently.

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 revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate the procedures and lines of responsibility for all persons involved in the placement experience for the students on the programme, and to formalise arrangements for learning outcomes and assessments.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the practice placement providers and the education provider demonstrated a good working relationship at the visit, but also noted that there is a significant change in the way students will undertake placements in the new programme. Instead of taking one year to undertake all of their practical experience students will undertake smaller period of placement experience in each of the three years of the programme. The visitors received information about placements in the Work-Based Training Placement Handbook, the Allocation Process document and the Code of Conduct documents, but the practice placement providers and the programme team talked about 'plans' and 'understandings' to facilitate the changes to placements, which were not clearly reflected in the documentation provided.

The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team ensure that students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators are fully prepared for placement. In particular, the visitors require evidence of how they are made aware of the learning outcomes to be achieved on each placement, the assessment procedures, expectations of professional conduct, the communication and lines of responsibility while a student is on placement, practice placement education training plans and policies for travel and accommodation, in terms of costs to students. In this way the visitors can be sure that everyone is fully prepared for placement and that this standard can be met.

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 HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The education provider must provide clarity that exit awards do not lead directly to registration with the HCPC.

Reason: From the programme documentation and discussion with the programme team, the visitors were unclear about whether any exit awards exist for the programme, and if they do whether there is enough clarity for students that these awards do not lead to HCPC registration. The Programme Specification document states that there are exit awards titled 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare Studies', 'Certificate in Higher Education in Healthcare Science' and 'Diploma in Higher Education in Healthcare Science'. On page 9, it then states that 'alternative exit awards are available for students who exit with less than 360 credits', but does not state that these exit awards do not lead to HCPC registration. The documentation also states that if a student does not pass the work-based learning element of the programme, that they will be able to transfer to the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme which will 'not be confer HCPC approval'. At the visit, the programme team discussed removing fallback and exit awards from the programme in line with the university validation team's requirements. The visitors require evidence that final arrangements for the provision of exit awards are made in line with HCPC requirements to be satisfied that this standard is met.

William Gilmore
Mary MacDonald