

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Queen Margaret University
Programme name	MSc Music Therapy (Nordoff Robbins)
Mode of delivery	Full time and Part Time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Art therapist
Relevant modality / domain	Music therapy
Date of visit	20 - 21 April 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 'Music Therapist' must be registered with us. The HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 7 July 2010. At the Committee meeting on 26 August 2010, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider and reviewed the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – MSc Art Therapy and MSc Art Psychotherapy (International). 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 programmes. 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.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Jennifer French (Music Therapist) Margaret Foster (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ben Potter
Proposed student numbers	15
Initial approval	September 2005
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Michael Stewart (Queen Margaret University)
Secretary	Sheila Adamson (Queen Margaret University)
Members of the joint panel	Gordon Campbell (Internal Panel Member) Mairghread Ellis (Internal Panel Member) Maciej Czajka (Internal Panel Member)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<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"/>

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 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must provide an indication of the specialist expertise and knowledge provided by visiting lecturers for the 'music therapy studies' module.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussions with the programme team that a number of visiting lecturers (VLs) were responsible for delivering key aspects of the 'music therapy studies' module. This module has been revised and now contains a great deal of taught material which relates directly to several of the standards of proficiency for Arts therapists. While the learning outcomes of the module are well articulated there was no indication in the documentation of which professions the visiting lecturers were from. The professional background of the VLs determines their specialist expertise and knowledge and subsequently impacts on the students' learning and how they may meet the standards of proficiency for Arts therapists. The visitors therefore require an indicative list of visiting lecturers and their professional background. This will allow the visitors to be confident that the staff delivering the module have a sufficient range of expertise and knowledge and those students who successfully complete the module can meet the relevant Standards of Proficiencies (SoPs).

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the 'music therapy studies' and placement modules are adequately described and delivered to demonstrate that students successfully completing these modules have met the relevant standards of proficiency.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussions with the programme team that a number of visiting lecturers were responsible for delivering key aspects of the 'music therapy studies' module. The visitors agreed that the learning outcomes of this module allow students who successfully complete it to meet several standards of proficiency including SoP 3a.1 specifically regarding Sub points 6 (understand core processes in therapeutic practice, etc) and 12 (know about normal human development, normal and abnormal psychology, etc)The visitors stated that, as in SET 3.6, the professional background of the visiting lecturers determines their specialist expertise and knowledge and subsequently how the learning outcomes are met. The visitors also noted that the delivery and learning outcomes relevant to SoPs 1b.1, 1b.2 and 1b.4 are not clearly articulated in the module descriptors for placement and supervision (and/or elsewhere).The visitors therefore require documentation to allow the visitors to determine if the staff delivering the 'music therapy studies' module can ensure that the learning outcomes are met and that the learning outcomes relevant to SoPs 1b.1, 1b.2 and 1b.3 are clearly articulated in the relevant module descriptors. This will allow the visitors to be confident that

those students who successfully complete these modules can meet the relevant standards of proficiency for Arts therapists.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the 'music therapy studies' module and the learning outcomes relevant to SoPs 1b1, 1b2 and 1b4 are adequately assessed within the placement and supervision module (and/or elsewhere) to demonstrate that students successfully completing these modules have met the relevant standards of proficiency,

Reason: The visitors noted in discussions with students and the programme team that while the learning outcomes of the 'music therapy studies module' were sufficient for those successfully completing the module to meet the relevant SoPs for art therapists. They also noted that the assessment strategy would also allow students to meet the learning outcomes if it was delivered correctly. However the delivery of a great deal of the module by visiting lecturers has affected SET 3.6, 4.1 as well as SoP 1b.1, 1b.2 and 3a.1 as outlined above. The visitors also state that the methodology employed to adequately assess the learning outcomes is dependent on the professional background of the visiting lecturers and their specialist expertise and knowledge. The visitors also noted that the methodology for assessing learning outcomes with regard to SoPs 1b1, 1b2 and 1b4 are not clearly evidenced in the placement assessments (and/or elsewhere). The visitors therefore require information such as an indicative list of visiting lecturers and their professional background and clear learning outcomes articulated in relevant module descriptors. This will allow the visitors to determine if the visiting lecturers delivering key components of the 'music therapy studies' module can ensure that students are adequately assessed and that the learning outcomes relevant to SoPs 1b.1, 1b.2 and 1b.3 are clearly assessed in the relevant modules. This will allow the visitors to be confident that those students who successfully complete these modules can meet the relevant standards of proficiency for Arts therapists.

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 education provider should consider including in advertising material and pre interview information clear guidance on the minimum standard of proficiency expected on an harmonic instrument and how applicants utilising non harmonic instruments can provide evidence of their musical skill at interview.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussion with the programme team that the admissions procedures, specifically the interview process, gives both the applicants and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. However the visitors noted that the process emphasised the use of harmonic instruments at interview and very little was mentioned about the use of non-harmonic instruments. The visitors stated that this emphasis on demonstrating skill in the use of harmonic instruments could discourage some students from applying and also could affect the demographics from which students are recruited. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team revise the information provided to applicants to clarify the process for those who wish to demonstrate music aptitude in non harmonic instruments at interview, and to make explicit the minimum expectation of proficiency in an harmonic instrument.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider not including practice placement modules in those that can be included in any accreditation of prior experiential learning.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussion with the programme team that there is a mechanism to include accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APEL). Therefore the visitors are satisfied that the SET is met. However they did note that students when being granted APEL could be accredited for practice placement modules and therefore miss going on some practice placements. They felt that this could impact on a student's ability to meet the relevant SoPs delivered by those modules. Therefore they recommend that when a student is granted APEL that they do not receive accreditation in lieu of any part of the practice placements throughout the programme.

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 clarifying the process for the immediate withdrawal of a student when there is a case of gross misconduct by including it in the programme documentation.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussion with students, practice placement providers and the programme team that there is a process in place to deal with students profession related conduct and specifically gross misconduct. The visitors are therefore satisfied that the SET is met. However this process is not articulated in the programme documentation. This may lead to the process being applied differently in different cases and as such leaving the programme team open to appeals. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team include the process for dealing with student misconduct in the documentation to provide clear information for practice placement providers and students.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider including the HPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students in module bibliographies as well as reviewing documentation to cite it fully to avoid any possible confusion.

Reason: The visitors noted that in the documentation and in discussion with students that the students did understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics. This was particularly in evidence in the placement modules. The visitors are therefore satisfied that the SET is met. However they recommend that the programme team review the current bibliographies for other taught modules to include the HPC's guidance on standards of conduct, performance and ethics. They also recommend that instances where the guidance is referred to in the documentation should use the full title of the HPC's guidance on standards of conduct, performance and ethics to avoid any possible confusion for students. This would also further embed the standards in learning throughout the curriculum.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider ways of increasing students' time spent on placement to over one day a week.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation and in discussion with students, practice placement providers and the programme team that students are on placement one day a week for several months across the academic year. The placements are undertaken in tandem with teaching at the education provider and as such the visitors are therefore satisfied that the SET is met. However the visitors recommend that the time spent on placement could be increased from one day a week. This would allow students more time in a practical environment and also allow students to get a broader, possibly more concentrated, experience of practice which may involve them in aspects of practice other than therapy.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to monitor the training and support given to non-HPC registered practice placement educators and consider providing additional support and training where necessary

Reason: The visitors noted in discussions with the students, practice placement providers and programme team that there were some practice placement educators who had not undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training and were not HPC registered practitioners. They also noted that the education provider undertakes regular training days at the University and at various practice locations. They acknowledge the difficulties in acquiring practice placement educators due to the practical difficulties involved in providing a service such as this in this location and the mitigation of this by the support provided by the programme team. The visitors are therefore satisfied that the SET is met. However, to maintain consistency across practice placements the visitors felt that the efforts to train practice placement educators, particularly non-HPC registered practice placement educators should be monitored and additional support provided where necessary. This would be to ensure that all students continue to achieve their learning outcomes from practice placements especially those placed with non-HPC registered or non traditional practice placement educators.

Jennifer French
Margaret Foster