Visitors' report

Name of education provider	The Robert Gordon University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Physiotherapist
Date of visit	28 – 29 September 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 'Physiotherapist 'or 'Physical 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 9 December 2010. At the Committee meeting on 9 December 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 an HPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes – MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration), Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) and BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy. Separate reports exists for these programmes.
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Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Fleur Kitsell (Physiotherapist) Claire Brewis (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Mandy Hargood
Proposed student numbers	42
Initial approval	September 1994
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Jo Royle (The Robert Gordon University)
Secretary	Lucy Jack (The Robert Gordon University)

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 external examiners reports prior to the visit as the education provider did not submit it.

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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 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

2.1 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 revisit the programme and admissions documentation to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation.

Reason: The programme and admissions information submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by the HPC. In particular, there were instances of out-of-date terminology in reference to HPC being a professional body, accrediting a programme or requiring a certain number of practice hours for the programme. There was also a reference to HPC regulations superseding the university regulations and not allowing more than '…one retrieval opportunity in academic or practice education'. The HPC does not accredit programmes and does not set any requirements on a programme such as number of practice hours or the number of assessment re-takes that are permitted. In addition there were references to students on completion of the programme being able to apply for registration with the HPC rather than being 'eligible to apply for registration with the HPC.' The visitors considered the terminology to be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require the programme and admissions documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology throughout. This will ensure that applicants have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to ensure that the procedures relating to selection and entry criteria, particularly the process enacted for checking applicants for criminal convictions, is clearly stated.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that the education provider had in place clear admissions procedures and entry criteria in relation to the programme, including a clear process for checking applicants for previous criminal convictions. However, the processes as detailed within the documentation were judged by the visitors not to accurately represent the procedures as described, and were thus judged to be potentially confusing. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise their documentation to accurately reflect the processes as described by the programme team during the visit.

Recommendations

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 references to the HPC Guidance on conduct, performance and ethics for students in relevant reading lists.

Reason: The visitors were content that the education provider was including the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics along with the professional body code of ethics in the detailed module descriptor and referring to the document in the sessions regarding conduct. The visitors considered that including the HPC Guidance on conduct, performance and ethics for students in relevant module reading lists would enhance the student learning and provide the students with the tools to understand what is required of them when they become practitioners.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing how they present the assessment strategy for the programme in the detailed course descriptor, so that the objectivity of assessment is more evident.

Reason: Whilst the visitors were happy that the assessment strategy and design ensured that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register, they considered that the description provided by the programme team during their meeting was clear and this level of detail could enhance the detailed course descriptor and also the student handbook further.

Fleur Kitsell
Claire Brewis