

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	The University of Northampton
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time, Part time and In service
Relevant part of HPC register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	13 -14 May 2008

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence.....	5
Recommended outcome	6
Conditions	7
Recommendations	14

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 13 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Occupational 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 on 18 August 2008. At the Education and Training Committee's meeting on 18 August 2008, 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 - curriculum standards and assessment standards. 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 reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The education provider, the professional body 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 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 education provider and the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Ms Sarah Johnson (Occupational Therapist) Ms Susan Thompson (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Miss Elisa Simeoni
HPC observer	Mr Osama Ammar
Proposed student numbers	90
Initial approval	September 2002
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2008
Chair	Ms Delia Heneghan, The University of Northampton
Secretary	Mr Matthew Watson
Members of the joint panel	Dr Mary Hanley (The University of Northampton, Internal Panel Member) Ms Julia Vernon (The University of Northampton, Internal Panel Member) Mr Paul McDermott (The University of Northampton, Internal Panel Member) Ms Fiona Douglas (University of the West of England, External Panel Member) Mrs Heather Reed

	<p>(Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Trust, External Panel Member)</p> <p>Ms Mel Platts (University Hospitals Leicester NHS Trust)</p> <p>Ms Deborah Hearle (Cardiff University, External Panel Member)</p> <p>Mrs Jan Jensen (Canterbury Christ Church University, External Panel Member)</p> <p>Mr Ian Roberts (Graduate Member of the Panel)</p> <p>Ms Sally Feaver (College of Occupational Therapists)</p> <p>Ms Jo-Anne Supyk (College of Occupational Therapists)</p> <p>Ms Remy Reyes (College of Occupational Therapists)</p>
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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"/>
Common academic framework – Framework specification September 2007	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' report 2004/2005	<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 (e.g. 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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 40 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 23 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 admission procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must redraft and resubmit the advertising materials for the programme, including the website entry, to follow the guidance provided in the HPC “Regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers”.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and a review of the education provider’s website, it was clear that the advertising materials for the programme did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. Therefore, in order to provide applicants with the correct information to make an informed choice about whether to join the programme, the visitors felt the text used for advertising must be amended. In particular, “state registration” and “licence to practise” are used as terms in the documentation and do not reflect the independence of the HPC or its performance of its regulatory function through protection of title. Moreover, the text used for advertising must be amended to clearly state that successful completion of the programme will lead to eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council.

2.2.2 The admission procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal conviction checks.

Condition: The programme team must review the programme documentation to clearly articulate that criminal records checks are part of the admissions criteria. Furthermore, it must be clearly stated in the documentation that the criminal records checks are enhanced.

Reason: In discussion it became clear that that criminal records were being performed in such a way to meet this standard, however, the documentation did not reflect this process. The visitors felt the programme documentation must be updated to reflect the actual process undertaken and that the criminal records checks are performed at an enhanced level.

2.2.3 The admission procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The programme team must review the programme documentation to clearly articulate that health checks are part of the admissions criteria.

Reason: In discussion it became clear that that health checks were being performed in such a way to meet this standard. However, the documentation did not reflect this process. Therefore, the visitors felt the programme documentation must be updated to reflect the actual process undertaken.

2.2.5 The admission procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including Accreditation of Prior Learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to include the accreditation of prior learning and other inclusion mechanisms policy.

Reason: In discussion it became clear that the programme team implements the accreditation of prior learning policy of the university. However, there were no references to this in the documentation submitted. Therefore the visitors felt that references to the accreditation of prior learning policy of the university must be articulated in the programme documentation.

2.3 The admission procedures must ensure that the education provider has an equal opportunities policy and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to candidates and students, together with an indication of how this will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide more information about the interview process.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, it is mentioned that students who meet the entry criteria are invited to take part in an assessed group task. The visitors felt that more evidence must be submitted about the group interview and that this information should be included in the programme documentation to make the process clear to applicants.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide the prospective student cohort number as well as an indication of the funding arrangements.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, the commissioning numbers and validated numbers were not indicated. During the visit, the education provider provided some clarification but the visitors felt that a statement indicating the commissioned number of students and the validated number must be submitted.

3.9 Where students participate as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The education provider must provide information about the protocols used to obtain consent where students participate as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: In discussion, it was clear that there is a form used to obtain consent from students. However, the visitors did not have an opportunity to review the

protocols and therefore require additional documentary evidence to assist them in determining how this standard is met.

3.11 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must include the attendance policy in the programme specification.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, the attendance policy is included only in the Student handbook. The visitors felt that this policy must be also included in the programme specification as it is a crucial policy of the programme and must form part of the validated definitive document.

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 programme team must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation to include updated versions of all module descriptors in the programme.

Reason: In the original documentation received by the visitors the module descriptors were, in some cases, older versions. A significant number of additional module changes to learning outcomes and assessment were also tabled at the programme team meeting. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must be updated to include the latest module descriptors for the programme. The visitors will then be able to assess the amended learning outcomes and assessment methods to review how the standards of proficiency are delivered to students.

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum to enable safe and effective practice.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to clearly reflect that integration of theory and practice are central to the curriculum.

Reason: Although this was made clear by the presentation given during the meeting with the programme team, the visitors didn't feel that it was clearly articulated in the documentation. Therefore, they felt that a statement should be included in the validated definitive document to make explicit the integration of theory and practice.

4.7 Where there is inter-professional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to reflect the current implementation of their inter-professional learning strategy in the programme.

Reason: The documentation submitted shows that the programme includes inter-professional learning. However, there is little evidence of where the inter-professional learning is covered. In order to be able to determine accurately the impact of the inter-professional learning on the programme, the visitors felt that a clearer indication of how the strategy is implemented for the programme must be submitted.

5.3.1 The practice placement settings must provide a safe environment.

Condition: The programme team must submit the procedure that is in place to approve and monitor all placements outside Northamptonshire and overseas to show that practice placements settings provide a safe environment. This must include details of how students are allocated and how placements are monitored.

Reason: During the meeting with the programme team, some documentation was given to the visitors but there was insufficient time to be able to fully assimilate the information. However, the visitors felt that further evidence must be submitted to ensure that all practice placement settings will provide a safe environment.

5.3.2 The practice placement settings must provide safe and effective practice.

Condition: The programme team must submit the procedure that is in place to approve and monitor all placements outside Northamptonshire and overseas to show that practice placements settings provide a safe environment. This must include details of how students are allocated and how placements are monitored.

Reason: During the meeting with the programme team, some documentation was given to the visitors but there was insufficient time to be able to fully assimilate the information. However, the visitors felt that further evidence must be submitted to ensure that all practice placement settings will provide for safe and effective practice.

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

Condition: The programme team must submit the procedure that is in place to approve and monitor all placements outside Northamptonshire and overseas to show that practice placements settings provide a safe environment. This must include details of how students are allocated and how placements are monitored.

Reason: During the meeting with the programme team, some documentation was given to the visitors but there was insufficient time to be able to fully assimilate the information. However, the visitors felt that further evidence must be submitted to ensure that the education provider has effective mechanisms in place to approve and monitor all placements.

5.7.1 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved.

Condition: The education provider must review the handbook for practice educators to include the learning outcomes to be achieved during practice placements.

Reason: During the meeting with the practice educators, it appeared that the information about the learning outcomes to be achieved given by the education provider to practice educators and students was not sufficient. A significant number of additional module changes to learning outcomes and assessment were also tabled at the programme team meeting. Therefore the visitors felt that the learning outcomes to be achieved during practice placements must be updated included in the handbook for practice educators.

5.7.4 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to make clear to practice placements educators the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in case of failure.

Reason: During the meeting with the placement providers, the visitors asked the practice educators whether they knew about the implication and any action to be taken in the case of failure. It was evident that the placement providers were not fully aware of all the assessments procedures. Therefore the visitors felt that further information should be included in the handbook for practice educators.

5.13 The placement providers must have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to students, together with an indication of how this will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that there is a process in place to ensure that non-NHS placement providers and non-Local Authorities placements providers have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to students.

Reason: While it was felt that NHS and Local Authorities placements providers have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in place, the visitors did not feel that the education provider has a process in place to ensure that non-

NHS and non-Local Authorities placements providers have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy. Therefore, overseas placement providers, non-NHS placement providers and non-Local Authorities placement providers would need to provide this information to the education provider.

6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practice.

Condition: The education provider must include more information about the assessment strategy in the programme documentation.

Reason: During the visit, the programme team clarified some of the regulations like the resit policy. However, the visitors felt that further information must be submitted and included in the programme documentation, in particular about compensation and condonement regulations, in order they make sure that individuals who successfully complete the programme are fit to practise.

6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practice.

Condition: The education provider must include more information about placement assessments tools in the programme documentation.

Reason: In the original documentation received by the visitors, little evidence was provided about placements assessment tools. Therefore, the visitors felt that placement assessment tools must be fully explained in the programme documentation to make sure that this standard is fully met.

6.2 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practice safely and effectively.

Condition: The programme team must redraft and resubmit the programme documentation to include updated versions of all module descriptors in the programme.

Reason: In the original documentation received by the visitors the module descriptors were, in some cases, older versions. A significant number of additional module changes to learning outcomes and assessment were also tabled at the programme team meeting. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must be updated to include the latest module descriptors for the programme. The visitors will then be able to assess the amended learning outcomes and assessment methods to review how the standards of proficiency are delivered to students.

6.3 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external reference frameworks can be measured.

Condition: The education provider must provide mapping exercises against external reference frameworks.

Reason: A Health Profession Council's Standards of Proficiency cross-mapping document was included in the documentation. However, the visitors would like to see other mapping exercises against external reference frameworks, in particular the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. It was indicated that these mapping exercises had already been completed but not submitted for scrutiny and therefore would not create an additional burden on the programme team.

6.4 The measurement of student performance and progression must be an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation, and use objective criteria.

Condition: The programme team must submit evidence of objective criteria used in the assessment.

Reason: The documentation submitted included a generic grade assessment criteria guideline for the education provider. However, there was no evidence of objective criteria used in the assessment. Therefore, the visitors felt that this evidence must be submitted in order to make sure that the standard is met.

6.5 There must be effective mechanisms in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence showing that effective mechanisms are in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessments.

Reason: In the submitted documentation, the external examiners' reports from the last three years were included. However, the visitors felt that more information about how the programme assessed must be submitted, in particular about the internal and external moderation process.

6.7.4 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.

Condition: The education provider must include the procedure for the right of appeal for students in the programme documentation.

Reason: The procedure for the right of appeal for students was not included in the submitted programme documentation. The visitors felt that this procedure must be made available to students and therefore felt that this document should be included at least in the Student handbook.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider indicating the members of staff who are HPC registered.

Reason: In the documentation submitted, it was not made clear which members of staff were currently HPC registered. The visitors felt that this should be indicated, especially in the Curriculum Vitae.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.

Condition: The education provider should review the programme documentation to amend references to 1000 hours of practice based education being an HPC requirement.

Reason: In the submitted documentation there were references to a certain number of hours in practice education being a requirement for the professional body. The visitors felt that the wording of the paragraph could be misleading and imply that this is a requirement from the Health Professions Council. Therefore the programme documentation should be amended to make this clear.

Ms Sarah Johnson
Ms Susan Thompson