

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Liverpool
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC register	Physiotherapy
Date of visit	9 – 11 April 2008

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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 13 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 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 changes affected the following standards - programme admissions standards, programme management and resources standards, curriculum standards, practice placements 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. The visit also considered the following programmes - BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, BSc (Hons) Orthoptics, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy. 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. Separate reports exist 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	Ms Margaret Curr (Physiotherapist) Ms Kathleen Bosworth (Physiotherapist) Dr Nicola Spalding (Occupational therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Miss Elisa Simeoni
Proposed student numbers	44
Initial approval	21 September 1999
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2008
Chair	Ms Julie Walton (University of Liverpool)
Secretary	Ms Janis Paine (University of Liverpool)
Members of the joint panel	Professor Cynthia Pine (University of Liverpool/Internal Panel Member) Professor Gordon Tatlock (University of Liverpool/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"/>
Other Assessment handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Context document	<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 condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 62 of the SETs have been met and that a condition should be set on the remaining SET. 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 have also made a number of commendations. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

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 redraft and resubmit the student consent form and the policy associated with it to clarify the information provided to students regarding participation and consent as a client or patient in all practice settings.

Reason: In the documentation provided by the education provider for the visit the policy that accompanied the consent form stated “normally students will be expected to consent...” Therefore although consent was always obtained, students could opt out if there was an issue with a particular situation for that student. Although the education provider explained that students were counselled as to the consequences of opting out the visitors were concerned that if a student took this option then the student may not be able to meet all of the standards of proficiency for the programme.

Recommendations

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider inclusion of topics such as exercise prescription in order to develop students' ability to respond to changing employment opportunities, particularly outside of the National Health Service (NHS).

Reason: It is apparent from the documentation that there is currently no exercise prescription included in the curriculum. However the inclusion of this topic would be helpful for students to have a wider vision of the job market particularly outside of the NHS and encourage them to consider wider job opportunities.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider amending the assessment marking descriptors to provide more detail on the learning opportunities and assessment outcomes.

Reason: From review of the submitted documentation, the visitors felt that the assessment marking descriptors are currently restrictive with regard to the learning and assessment opportunities available to students. To better reflect the wide range of learning and assessment opportunities, the visitors felt the programme team should revisit the assessment marking descriptors.

Commendations

The visitors wish to commend the following aspects of the programme,

Commendation: The visitors would like to commend the team on the introduction of the new 'hub and spoke' model for clinical education which results in greater flexibility in placement provision. The excellent systems operation of the model by clinical educators creates a range of new learning experiences for students

Reason: There is an excellent partnership between the clinical educators and the university staff which contributes to optimise students' placements. This was seen as innovative and best practice.

Commendation: The visitors wished to congratulate the School of Health Sciences on introducing monthly "drop-in" sessions for students within the School in support of the work of the Faculty Clinical Psychology Advisory Service to provide student counselling and support.

Reason: The visitors felt that this "drop-in" sessions was an enhancement to the School's facilities for ensuring the welfare and well-being of the students during their time at University and a model for best practice.

Ms Margaret Curr
Ms Kathleen Bosworth
Dr Nicola Spalding