

Visitors' report – amended approval process for independent prescribing programmes

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Section one: Programme details

Name of education provider	University of Ulster
Programme name	Postgraduate Certificate in Medicines Management (Independent and Supplementary Prescribing)
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant entitlements	Independent prescribing Supplementary prescribing Prescription only medicine
Name of HCPC visitors and visitor role	Nicholas Haddington (Independent prescribing) Emma Supple (Chiropodist / podiatrist)
HCPC executive	Tracey Samuel-Smith
Date of assessment day	7 November 2013

Section two: Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve education programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us.

As well as approving educational programmes for individuals who want to join the Register, the HCPC approve programmes for those already on the Register.

Along with several other entitlements, we currently approve programmes to allow:

- chiropodists / podiatrists, radiographers and physiotherapists to have their registration record annotated with supplementary prescribing; and
- chiropodists / podiatrists and physiotherapists to have their registration record annotated with independent prescribing.

We have previously ensured that a currently running supplementary prescribing programme at this education provider has met the standards of education and training (SETs). As this new or amended programme is based on an existing HCPC approved supplementary prescribing programme, we can be satisfied that it meets some of the standards for prescribing, which are based on the SETs. However, we have identified some standards where we will need to make a judgement about how the introduction or modification of elements of the programme impact on the way it meets these standards.

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets the standards for education providers part of the standards for prescribing, and that those who complete the programme demonstrate an ability to meet the standards for all prescribers (along with the additional standards for independent prescribers where required).

This programme is also intended as an approved prescription only medicine (POM) programme, and therefore must ensure that students who complete the programme will demonstrate an ability to meet the following standard of proficiency required for POM:

- Be able to use systematic approach to formulate and test a preferred diagnosis including being able to - administer relevant prescription-only medicines, interpret any relevant pharmacological history and recognise potential consequences for patient treatment.

Section three: Submission details

The following required documents were provided as part of the submission:

- Information for applicants (eg advertising materials, admissions / entry criteria)
- Programme specification
- Student handbook
- Information about programme and management team structure, including staff CVs
- Module descriptors
- Extracts from practice placement documents
- Extracts from assessment regulations relating to student progression and external examiners
- Standards for prescribing mapping document

The following additional documents were also provided as part of the submission:

- External examiner CV
- Course handbook
- Physical resourcing document

Section four: Additional documentation

- The visitors agreed that no further documentation was required in order to make a recommendation.
- The visitors agreed that additional documentation was required in order to make a recommendation. The standards for which additional documentation is requested are listed below with reasons for the request.

B.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: The visitors noted the education provider submitted information about the programme team, management structure and staff curriculum vitae in evidencing how this standard was met. The visitors noted that the introduction of independent prescribing for chiropodists / podiatrists and physiotherapists may have impacted on other aspects of the programme, but, no information was provided as to the place of this specific programme in the business plan or strategy for the education provider. The visitors were therefore unable to ensure that the programme will be sustainable and supportable.

Suggested documentation: Evidence as to the programme's security and support within the education provider, for example a business plan extract or letter of confirmation from senior management.

B.14 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Reason: The visitors were provided with a copy of the course handbook which outlined the attendance policy for the independent and supplementary prescribing programme. The visitors noted it was expected that students attend all lectures and that attendance would be monitored. If patterns of absenteeism or high levels of absence were recorded, the student would be invited for a meeting with the module coordinator and / or course director to address any issues around non-attendance / non engagement. However, no information was provided to students about which elements of the programme required mandatory attendance. The visitors recognised that certain parts of the programme would require mandatory attendance in order for individuals to meet the standards for prescribers. They also recognised that the introduction of the prescribing standards may have changed the elements of the programme which required this. The visitors therefore require evidence of which parts of the programme require mandatory attendance and how this is communicated to students to ensure this standard is met.

Suggested documentation: Information about which elements of the programme require mandatory attendance, and how this is communicated to students.

Section five: Recommendation of the visitors

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- There is sufficient evidence to show the programme meets the standards for education providers part of the standards for prescribing, along with the required standard of proficiency for POM, and therefore that the programme be approved
- There is insufficient evidence to determine if or how the programme meets the standards for education providers part of the standards for prescribing, and that those who complete the programme will demonstrate an ability to meet the following standard of proficiency required for POM:

Be able to use systematic approach to formulate and test a preferred diagnosis including being able to - administer relevant prescription-only medicines, interpret any relevant pharmacological history and recognise potential consequences for patient treatment.

Therefore, a visit is recommended to gather more evidence, and if required place conditions on approval of the programme

Section six: Visitors' comments

The visitors noted that the education provider submitted a course handbook which included information about their Fitness to Practise procedures. The visitors suggest the programme team update their documentation to ensure the terminology used accurately reflects HCPC's Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.