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HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Cumbria
Name of programme(s)	MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration), Full time BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy, Full time
Approval visit date	12 - 14 September 2018
Case reference	CAS-12970-M6W4Q3

Contents

Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Through undertaking this process, we have noted areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes in section 6 of this report.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards
We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

How we make our decisions
We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Joanne Watchman	Lay
Fleur Kitsell	Physiotherapist
Joanna Jackson	Physiotherapist
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive
Ismini Tsikaderi	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the approval visit
This was a multi-professional visit with two HCPC panels. One panel for the physiotherapy programmes, and one panel for the occupational therapy programmes. For both programmes, there were representatives from their respective professional bodies, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

For both professions at this multi-profession event there were representatives from the education provider and the external panel members from their relevant professions. Outlined below are the details of the other groups in attendance at this approval visit. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Internal panel members		
Signey Henderson	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Cumbria
Debbie Speight	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Cumbria
Karen Mills	Internal panel member	University of Cumbria
Michael Mitchell	Internal panel member	University of Cumbria
Suzanne Parkes	Internal panel member	University of Cumbria
Tony Greenwood	Internal panel member	University of Cumbria
External panel members		
Anne Wallace	External panel member – Physiotherapy representative	Robert Gordon University
Elizabeth McKay	External panel member – Occupational therapy representative	Edinburgh Napier University
Professional body panel members		
Nina Paterson	Representative for Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Steven Ryall	Representative for Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Helen Carey	Representative of Royal College of Occupational Therapists	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Maureen Shiells	Representative of Royal College of Occupational Therapists	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Ruth Heames	Representative of Royal College of Occupational Therapists	Royal College of Occupational Therapists
HCPC Occupational therapy panel members		
Jennifer Caldwell	HCPC panel member – Occupational therapist	HCPC
Joanna Goodwin	HCPC panel member – Occupational therapist	HCPC
Louise Whittle	HCPC panel member – lay visitor	HCPC
Shaista Ahmad	HCPC panel member – Executive	HCPC

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Physiotherapist
First intake	01 September 2012
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 25
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01814

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Physiotherapist
First intake	01 September 2008
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 35
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01815

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment.

The education provider informed the HCPC that they were revalidating their pre-registration physiotherapy provision. The education provider highlighted there were significant changes in practice-based learning since the last validation, and there will be major changes in the structure and content of the programmes.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 16 November 2018.

2.1 The admissions process 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 demonstrate that the admissions process gives 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 the programmes.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors found that the information provided to applicants for both programmes did not include explicit information about additional costs associated with the programmes or the health requirements for the admissions process. For example, the visitors read in the Placement Handbook that learners may be required to provide up to date criminal convictions check, which they would need to pay for. In addition, the visitors read about the occupational health checks that would be required before going on placement. The visitors found this information in the Placement Handbook only, and note that this would typically be read when the learner has started the programme, not at the application stage. At the visit, the learners on the current programmes said there were additional costs they incurred which they did not know about before starting the programme, including costs incurred

for travel and accommodation for practice-based learning. The programme team highlighted that all of this information is given to applicants at the interview and open days. While applicants may receive this information at interview and open days, the visitors are not clear if an applicant would be able to find that explicit information in the documentation and resources provided. From the information provided, the visitors could not determine that explicit information about additional costs and admissions requirements are made clear to applicants. As such, the visitors require further information about the information provided and when it is provided to applicants, in order to make a judgement about this standard.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is a process in place to ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider provided the name and curriculum vitae of the current programme leader for the programmes. The visitors raised with the senior team that this standard now requires the education provider to ensure there is an effective process in place to identify a suitable person and, if it becomes necessary, a suitable replacement. The senior team explained there is no formal written process in place. The senior team explained they work on a '5 year rotation' where a senior lecturer would be recruited to the programme lead role, and would shadow the current programme-leader before moving into the position. The education provider ensures the senior lecturers are appropriately qualified, experienced and on the relevant part of the Register as it is part of their job description. The visitors agree this is an effective process; however, it is not currently a written formal process. Therefore they cannot determine that this will be formal and ongoing, in order to meet the standard. As such, the visitors require further evidence to determine that there is an effective process in place to ensure the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how there will be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Reason: To evidence this standard the education provider referred to the Briefing Document, which talks about how practice education providers are involved with the programme through employer feedback, training opportunities, and half way visits carried out by the education provider. The practice education providers in attendance at the visit noted that they had not been directly involved with the development of the new programmes, although there was a meeting early on in the development process that many practice education providers could not attend. The programme team told the visitors that there is a lot of informal communication, and there is an annual programme of events. The programme team also talked of their plans to develop a system to

integrate academic and clinical systems. The visitors note from the documentation and discussions at the visit that there are a numbers of opportunities for collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers, however due to availability of practice educators most of the collaboration is through informal communication. The visitors could not determine how this would ensure ongoing collaboration with all practice education providers to ensure this happens on a regular, continued basis. The visitors were provided with verbal reassurances / plans for effective collaboration going forward, and noted their plans for further involvement of practice education providers on the programmes. However, as they have not seen this in documentation, the visitors were unclear how the information provided demonstrates that regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education provider would be undertaken on an ongoing basis. As such, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates there is a plan in place to address how they intend to maintain regular and effective collaboration with practice education providers.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Condition: The education provider must revise documentation to ensure that the information is accurate to ensure resources in all settings are effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme.

Reason: On review of the documentation, the visitors noted that in places, the documentation refers a clinical hours requirements of 1000 hours, as required by the HCPC. HCPC does not set such requirements. The visitors note that this information could mislead and confuse learners. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to revise the programme documentation, including advertising materials to ensure that the information is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for learners.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is an effective process in place to monitor attendance on the programme, and demonstrate how this is communicated to learners.

Reason: From the documentation, the visitors understood that there was a 100 per cent expectation of attendance for both taught sessions and practice-based learning on the programme. From the documentation, the visitors were not clear how attendance on the programme was monitored, or what the consequences were for learners who fell below the expected attendance requirement. The programme team noted that they are starting a new process, where the paper-based recording of attendance will be completed by the tutor rather than the learner and this will be kept in a shared drive. Any absences will be flagged to programme lead and tutors, and personal tutors will take forward progress review meetings with learners. The placement unit would monitor attendance for practice-based learning, and a similar process would be followed. The visitors agree that the monitoring process sounds effective, however the visitors were provided with verbal reassurances / plans and have not seen this as a formal process in documentation. From the information provided the visitors could not determine there are

effective monitoring processes in place for attendance on the programme. In addition, the learners on the current programmes were not clear what the consequence would be if they fell below the expected requirement. As such, the visitors could not determine that the monitoring process were clearly communicated to learners. Therefore, the education provider needs to demonstrate what the associated monitoring process are for attendance on the programme, what the consequences are for learners who fall below the requirements, and how this is communicated to learners.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure practice educators undertake initial and regular training, which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: In the documentation, the visitors read that the education provider offers mentorship modules, locality update days, refresher sessions, and one to one meetings with the practice education providers. From the documentation, the visitors were not clear whether the training for practice educators was mandatory, or if the education provider monitored the training of practice educators to ensure they were undergoing training before taking a learner and regular training thereafter. The programme team said that the Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) oversees the training for all practice educators, and holds a register of who has completed training. The programme team noted that a practice educator would be required to undergo some training before taking a learner, and then attending some form of training at least every two years. The programme team clarified that the education provider does not have access to the PEF information; however, the PEF would alert the education provider if they noted that a practice educator was not attending the training. On meeting with the practice education providers, the practice educators did not feel that the regular training was mandatory, and would attend training when they could however they found it increasingly difficult to be released from clinical practice in order to attend training. From the information provided and through discussions at the visit, the visitors could not determine that there was mandatory training for all practice educators, or that this was monitored by the education provider to ensure that practice educators do undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role. As such, the visitors require further information from the education provider to demonstrate how they ensure that practice educators undertake initial and regular training that is appropriate to their role.

Recommendations
We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to ensure that there is a strategy to ensure ongoing service user and carer involvement in the programme.

Reason: From discussions with the service users and carers, the visitors noted that service users had been involved in the development of the programme including

aspects such as talking with learners, sharing their experiences, and allowing learners to "practice" on them as experience before going onto complete the practice-based learning element of the programme. As this information was provided, the visitors were satisfied that this standard was met appropriately. However, from discussions with the service users and carers the visitors were informed there is limited involvement from the service users on the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were told the education provider is working on a plan for involving service users and carers more in the academic setting, which is yet to be formalised as well as developing partnerships in the local areas and third sector. As these plans had not been finalised, there may be a risk of meeting this standard in future, due to the limited nature of involvement currently. Therefore, the visitors recommend strengthening involvement of service users and carers by widening participation and the areas of the programme there are involved in.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 30 January 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.

Section 6: Future considerations for the programme(s)
We include this section to note areas that may need to be considered as part of future HCPC assessment processes. Education providers do not need to respond to this section at this time, but should consider whether to engage with the HCPC around these areas in the future.

From the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors were clear that the standards continue to be met. The education provider has increased the number of learners on the MSc programme through this approval process. The visitors note that while they are satisfied the education provider has availability, capacity and an appropriate range of practice-based learning for the number of learners on the programme, this appeared to be limited. At the visit, the education provider talked about plans to increase the range and capacity moving forward, whereby placement leads have been released from teaching to go out and develop practice-based learning opportunities in voluntary, independent and private sectors. The education provider had secured some observational placements in the private sector and hope that these would turn into longer-term practice-based learning opportunities. Through this, the education providers plan to increase availability and capacity of practice-based learning and to ensure there continues to be a broad range of practice-based learning opportunities. The education provider should consider providing information about the development and implementation of these plans through the next monitoring process to demonstrate how they continue to ensure availability, capacity and range of practice-based learning for the programmes.