

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Edge Hill University
Programme name	Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	11 – 12 November 2015

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'paramedic' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care 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 20 May 2016. At the Committee meeting, 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 HCPC 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 HCPC 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 HCPC 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.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Glyn Harding (Paramedic) Mark Nevins (Paramedic) Ian Prince (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Aveen Croash
Proposed student numbers	35 year one entry per cohort, one cohort per year 35 year two entry per cohort, two cohorts per year
First approved intake	September 2009
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2015
Chair	Mairi Byrne (Edge Hill University)
Secretary	Elaine McIntosh (Edge Hill University)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC 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"/>

During the visit the HCPC 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"/>
Service users and carers	<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 (eg 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 satisfied 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 the relevant 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 49 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining nine SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. 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 recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information to demonstrate how it continues to ensure the quality of the assessment and learning outcomes for the programme delivered by North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS) through the AP(E)L process.

Reason: From the documentation provided, and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were clear that there are two entry routes to the programme, direct entry and entry via the AP(E)L process in year two, with applicants being employed by NWAS. Applicants via the AP(E)L route will be exempt from completing year one of the programme due to their prior learning and experience with NWAS. The documentation submitted prior to the visit detailed the AP(E)L policy for the programme and for the institution. The visitors also noted that the programme has ten modules, delivered over a two year period.

The visitors were provided with a document which benchmarked the first year modules against the IHCD ambulance technician award programme delivered at NWAS. The visitors considered the benchmark exercise however, from this document, they were unable to determine how the learning outcomes of the IHCD ambulance technician award programme delivers all the learning outcomes of year one of this programme. During the programme team meeting the visitors learnt that potential applicants employed by NWAS will be assessed on an individual basis for entry onto the programme via the AP(E)L policy. The visitors were unable to see how applicants' prior learning would be mapped against the necessary learning outcomes to exempt them from completing year one of the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further information to demonstrate how they continue to ensure the quality of decisions made through its AP(E)L process.

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored through the admissions procedures.

Reason: The mapping document for the Standards of Education and Training (SETs) made reference to documents in relation to this standard. The visitors noted the equality and diversity policy is in place at the education provider. During the visit and from discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that there was an equality and diversity policy in place in relation to applicants and students, but were not clear how it is implemented and monitored. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the equality and diversity policies in place, together with an indication of how they are implemented and monitored in order to determine whether this standard continues to be met.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is correct and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: There were discrepancies in the programme documentation submitted by the education provider. For example, the programme specification on page 2 states “Approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for the purpose of eligibility for entry to the HCPC register as a paramedic”. Similarly, the placement handbook on page 11 states “Your programme has been designed in order that you accrue at least the minimum number of hours stipulated by the HCPC to enable you to register as a qualified paramedic at the end of your programme”. With reference to these examples respectively; completing an approved programme does not give automatic eligibility for entry to the Diploma in Higher Education Paramedic Practice Register however those who successfully complete an HCPC approved programme will be eligible to apply for registration with HCPC. Also, the HCPC does not prescribe minimum hours for placements, we require education providers to have appropriate range, number and duration of practice placements. The visitors noted several other instances of inaccurate information and instances which are not reflective of the current terminology used in relation statutory regulation and the HCPC. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to be revised to remove all instances of incorrect terminology. In this way the visitors can be sure that the documentary resources available to support students’ learning are being effectively used and that this standard continues to be met.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users, in practical sessions.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors noted a consent form as evidence to determine how this standard continues to be met. However, the visitors could not find Diploma in Higher Education Paramedic Practiced information about the option for students to opt out of participation. During the visit and discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that there are appropriate protocols in place to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users. During the programme team meeting, the visitors learnt that the programme team will update the existing protocols including their consent form to ensure students have the option not to participate, this includes confidentiality and managing situations when students decline from participating as service users. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide updated evidence of the protocols for obtaining informed consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence to demonstrate how service users and carers will be involved in the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors could not determine the exact nature of service users and carer involvement in the programme. The programme documentation suggested service users and carers will be involved in many aspects of the programme, such as admissions and programme delivery. Also, during discussions at the visit, it was indicated service users and carers may be involved in the interview process. However, from the discussions with the programme team it was clear that formal future plans to involve service users throughout the programme have yet to be finalised. At the visit, the service users and carers indicated that there are plans for their further involvement in the programme, but the programme team provided limited details about how the involvement will work. The visitors were unable to determine from the discussions or from the documentation provided that a plan is in place for how service users and carers will continue to be involved in the programme. In order to determine that this standard is met the visitors require further evidence demonstrating the plans for future service user and carer involvement.

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 education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, together with a mapping document giving information about how students who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs. The visitors were satisfied that the combined learning outcomes contained within all of the modules at level 4 and level 5 enable students to meet SOPs for paramedics. However, considering the condition set for SET 2.6, the visitors could not determine the criteria or process used to assess whether students entering via the AP(E)L route should be exempt from undertaking particular modules and / or learning outcomes. Therefore, they could not determine how the education provider can be satisfied that these students will meet all of the learning outcomes, and therefore meet the SOPs, on successful completion of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show how students who are exempt from undertaking particular learning at the education provider, such as those who have entered via the AP(E)L route, are able to meet the SOPs for paramedics on completing the programme.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates how students gain access to a wide range of learning experiences in the placement environment which support achievement of the learning outcomes.

Reason: At the visit practice educators stated that although students on the programme through the AP(E)L route will be employees of North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS) and they will be treated as students for the duration of their time on this programme. The programme team and practice educators indicated that direct entry students will be supernumerary for the duration of their time whilst on ambulance placements however, students enrolled through the AP(E)L route would not be guaranteed any supernumerary hours whilst on ambulance placements. Whilst the

HCPC does stipulate that students must achieve supernumerary hours during their placement, the visitors were unable to see where AP(E)L route students' time would be protected on placement to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes. In addition, the visitors were unsure how students on direct and AP(E)L route will have parity in their ambulance placements. Furthermore, the visitors could not see how an AP(E)L route student would be prioritised as a student rather than an employee of NWS in emergency situations where they might be required to drive an ambulance or perform other such duties. The visitors noted that whilst the priority is that AP(E)L route students will be expected to perform employer based duties in emergency situations they cannot be sure that these students will gain access to a wide range of learning experiences to support the achievement of learning outcomes and parity in ambulance placements. The visitors therefore require evidence to demonstrate how current placement arrangements appropriately support the delivery and achievement of the learning outcomes, or, that the current arrangements are adjusted to appropriately support the delivery and achievement of the learning outcomes and ambulance placements provide parity in placements for all students.

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.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, together with a mapping document giving information about how students who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs. The visitors were satisfied that the combined learning outcomes contained within all of the modules at level 4 and level 5 enable students to meet the SOPs for paramedics. However, considering the condition set for SET 2.6, the visitors could not determine the criteria or process used to assess whether students entering via the AP(E)L route should be exempt from undertaking particular modules and / or learning outcomes. Therefore, they could not determine how the education provider can be satisfied that these students will meet all of the learning outcomes, and therefore SOPs, on completing the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show how students who are exempt from undertaking particular learning at the education provider, such as those who have entered via the AP(E)L route, are assessed as able to meet the SOPs for paramedics on successful completion the programme. This condition is linked to the condition for SET 2.6 and SET 4.1.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the programme documentation clearly articulates that any aegrotat award given will not provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors could not identify where it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. The visitors were also unclear as to how this information is clearly communicated to students. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that, should

awards be given, they do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. This way the visitors can be satisfied that this information is available to students and that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Recommendation: The education provider should inform HCPC once they have moved to the new campus through the HCPC major change process.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the on-site facilities at the Manchester campus were effectively supporting students through the programme. As such they were content that this standard has been met. However, the visitors were informed at the visit that the education provider intends to move to new building in the near future. The visitors were presented with brief information on where the programme will be relocating to, but were not provided with any information on the resources that will be available at the new location. The visitors want to remind the education provider that they would need to notify HCPC through the major change process once they move to the new location as this may affect how the programme continues to meet this standard.

Glyn Harding
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