hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Queen Margaret University
Programme name	MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Occupational therapist
Date of visit	30 – 31 March 2010

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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 15 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 (Committee) on 7 July 2010. At the Committee meeting on 7 July 2010, 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 - programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum, practice placements and assessment. 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 visit also considered the following programme - Pg Dip Occupational Therapy. 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on this programme only. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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 was produced by the education provider and the professional body; outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Bernadette Waters(Occupational Therapist) Susan Lloyd (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Mandy Hargood
HPC observer	Tracey Samuel-Smith
Proposed student numbers	30
Initial approval	1 September 2005
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2010
Chair	Alan McDonald (Queen Margaret University)
Secretary	Sheila Adamson (Queen Margaret University)
Members of the joint panel	Lucy Clapson (Internal Panel member) Julia Dixon-Philip (Internal Panel Member) Lindesay Irvine (Internal Panel Member) Jane Hislop (Internal Panel Member) Alison Galloway (Internal Panel

	Member)
	Helen Kelly (Internal Panel Member)
	Christine Craik (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Sally Feaver (College of Occupational Therapists)
	Clair Parkin (College of Occupational Therapists)

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	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐
Programme evaluation document	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining two 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 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 admissions procedures 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 ensure that the level of academic and/or professional entry standards is clearly articulated in the admissions documentation to ensure that the applicant can make an informed choice as to whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: From the documentation and discussions with the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that appropriate selection and entry criteria, including academic and/or professional entry standards were applied as part of the admissions procedures. However, in the documentation available to potential applicants, the level of degree and what constituted an appropriate professional qualification was not clearly articulated. The visitors would like to receive clearly articulated documentation that explains the level of degree required for entry to the programme and the appropriate "professional" qualification to ensure that the applicant can make an informed choice as to whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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 formalise the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms within the admissions procedures.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation before the visit the visitors were unable to determine whether there was a policy or procedure that encompassed accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L and other inclusion mechanisms for the programme. However, during discussions with the students the visitors learnt that if a student had graduated over 12 years ago, they were required to undertake a prerequisite research skills module prior to joining the course. The visitors also heard from the programme team that an informal procedure was in place for admission to the programme. The visitors were concerned that the policies or procedures were not articulated within the admissions procedures and as such the visitors were unable to determine whether the policy ensured that applicants eligible for AP(E)L or another inclusion mechanism would be able to meet the standards of proficiency upon successful completion of the programme. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation that clearly identifies the AP(E)L and other inclusion mechanisms for admission to the programme.

Recommendations

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider developing a strategy to enhance the take-up of staff development opportunities.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the education provider had a good programme of staff development in place and that some members of the programme team were participating in this. However, due to practicalities of programme delivery, not all of the programme team were able to take advantage of these opportunities. The visitors felt that the staff development policy could be enhanced by developing a strategy to allow greater take-up of the staff development policy.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider further enhancement of the delivery of inter-professional learning for the programme.

Reason: The visitors were happy that this standard was met. From the tour and senior and programme team meetings the visitors learnt that inter-professional learning was conducted with the Art Therapy programme. However, the visitors learnt that there were other similar programmes at post graduate level within the school and they would like the education provider to consider further opportunities for inter-professional learning with these programmes to enhance the delivery of inter-professional learning.

Bernadette Waters
Susan Lloyd