hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Roehampton University
Programme name	PsychD in Counselling Psychology
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Counselling psychologist
Date of visit	5 – 6 July 2011

Contents

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 'Practitioner psychologist' or 'Counselling psychologist' 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. The education provider has until 30 August 2011 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 13 October 2011. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

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 13 October 2011. At the Committee meeting on 6 December 2011, 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 as the Practitioner psychologist profession came onto the register in July 2009 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether 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 professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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 the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. 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 professional body outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	David Packwood (Counselling psychologist)
	Robert Stratford (Educational Psychologist)
	Jacqueline Campbell (Lay visitor)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Mandy Hargood
Proposed student numbers	20
First approved intake	1 January 2007
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2011
Chair	Claire Ozanne (Roehampton University)
Secretary	Lucy Heming/Gillian Baldwin (Roehampton University)
Members of the joint panel	Camilla Olsen (British Psychological Society)
	Naomi Moller (British Psychological Society)
	Molly Ross (British Psychological Society)

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	☒	☐	☐

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 ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 46 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 11 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 did not make any 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 all documentation relating to admissions gives the applicant the required information to allow them to make a decision to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation submitted showed inconsistencies and did not give students a coherent explanation of the nature of the programme. It was not clear for example that any international applicant would need to have the International English Language Testing score (IELTs) of 7 overall and no element below 6.5. Also there was no information within the documentation about the pre course placement arrangements that are required and the counselling certificate that an applicant should hold which the visitors were informed of during the meeting with the programme team.

The visitors were informed in the meeting with the programme team that some admission information, including expectations for IELTS scores, was set and held centrally rather than at a departmental level. The programme team explained applicants received information about these admissions requirements at interview days.

In order for the visitors to be assured that this standard continues to be met they require revised documentation that clearly and consistently identifies all the information required by an applicant to make an informed choice as to whether to take up the offer of a place on the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence that an appropriate protocol is in place to gain trainee consent where they may participate as service users.

Reason: In the documentation received prior to the visit it was clear that there was no protocol in place for seeking trainee consent to participate as service users.

In the meeting with the trainees, the visitors asked if they had signed any form giving their consent to participate as a service user at any point whilst on the programme. The students reported that they had not signed any form but they had been asked to give verbal affirmation that they were happy to participate in role play activity. The programme team and students, in their respective meetings, considered that by signing up to the programme trainees were consenting to participate in activities in the role of service users. They considered that the seeking of consent was implicit. The visitors learned that although there were discussions and awareness of the issue, there was no

protocol in place to gain the informed consent of trainees to participate as service users.

Without explicit mechanisms the visitors were not satisfied the programme gained informed consent from trainees. Therefore the visitors require clarification of how trainees give their informed consent for participation and manage potential emotional distress and how the proposed protocol is to be implemented to meet this standard.

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 revise the programme documentation to make explicit how the learning outcomes of the programme allow students to meet the following standard of proficiency (SOP):

- **2b1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions;**

  - **be able to conduct service evaluations**

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were unclear as to how the above standard of proficiency was linked to specific learning outcomes in the programme.

In discussions with the programme team the visitors were informed that service evaluation was included with the research skills and using approaches in supervision and professional groups. Trainees were also encouraged to evaluate placement areas. The visitors considered the response from the team but felt that the specific requirements of service evaluation, as distinct from research, were not explicitly documented.

In order for the visitors to be assured that this standard is met, revised documentation is required which clarifies where and how the learning outcomes for the programme linked to the above standard of proficiency are delivered. The visitors require this information to ensure that individuals completing the programme will be able to meet all the standards required for safe and effective practice of the profession.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate how it ensures that all placements are approved and monitored effectively, especially prior to a trainee taking up a placement.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the education provider the visitors stated that it was not clear how the education provider effectively monitors practice placements. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that the current system relies on the trainees completing a check list form whilst on placement. The visitors could not find evidence of a thorough,

formal, system to approve and monitor practice placements. The visitors were subsequently unclear as to how the programme team ensures that the trainees are able to meet the learning outcomes associated with the placement aspects of the programme. The visitors therefore require documentary evidence of a thorough and effective practice placement approval and monitoring system. This should demonstrate how the programme team check that practice placements are providing trainees with and appropriate environment to benefit from the learning and teaching opportunities.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must document how it ensures that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in the placement setting.

Reason: The documentation that the visitors received prior to the visit indicated that there was a minimum criterion for the practice placement supervisors to meet. However as stated in the reason against SET 5.4, the form currently used for approving and monitoring practice placement areas relies on the trainees completing the form and the education provider uses this information for the approval of a placement.

At the meeting with the practice placement educators it became clear that the practice placement educators had not seen the Clinical Placement Handbook 2010 – 2011 provided to the visitors, and therefore did not know what the requirements were for ensuring their practice placement had an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at placements to ensure they provide the trainees with an appropriate placement experience.

In the meeting with the programme team it was reported that the handbook provided was new and that the team were working to ensure that placements had an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff as set out in the handbook.

The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures each placement site used by a trainee has an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition The education provider must provide evidence to show how it ensures that all clinical supervisors are adequately trained and that all supervisors new to the programme are appropriately inducted.

Reason: From the discussions at the visit and in the programme documentation provided, the visitors noted that the practice placement educators did not receive regular appropriate practice placement educator training.

In discussion with the practice placement educators it became clear that there had been a practice placement educator day where training and information

regarding the programme was given. However this had not happened for at least two years. It was also unclear if practice placement educators, both current and new had received training on the new assessment forms in the revised clinical handbook.

In the meeting with the programme team it was clear that any training, including the training of new practice placement educators was mainly done by telephone and email. The team reported that it was difficult to arrange training days that allowed all of the practice placement educators to come to a day and that they were considering how practice placement educators could receive training.

The visitors considered that there were ways of ensuring that practice placement educators were trained to ensure that they could be clear on learning outcomes and assessment procedures. The visitors considered that training was an important role for the education provider and therefore the education provider should consider ways in which practice placement educators could receive training to ensure that they are able to understand the learning outcomes and assessment procedures of the education provider.

Therefore the visitors want to receive further documentation to indicate how the education provider will train practice placement educators to ensure that they understand the leaning outcomes and assessment procedures for the programme.

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the systems in place to ensure there is regular, effective collaboration between the education provider and the placement provider.

Reason: Discussions and documentation highlighted that there was no regular structured communication between education provider and placement providers. Once the initial forms had been filled in by the trainees and submitted to the education provider there was no other maintained contact between education provider and placement. There was the opportunity for placement providers to contact the education provider in the case of problems with trainees but there was no other continued contact.

In the meeting with the practice placement educators, the visitors asked the practice placement educators about the collaboration they had with the education provider. It was evident that there was no regular communication and that the practice placement meetings that had been held annually with the education provider had not happened for two years. The practice placement educators felt that this was unfortunate as this meeting had been an effective way of learning more about the programme and also as a means of networking with the other practice placement educators.

The visitors therefore require further evidence that there is regular and effective collaboration in place between the education provider and placement provider.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
  - **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
  - **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
  - **expectations of professional conduct;**
  - **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
  - **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must provide clear documentation that provides trainees and practice placement educators with the information they require to understand the learning outcomes for the programme and the assessment procedure for the placement setting.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team and practice placement educators it was clear that there were plans to finalise the placement documentation once the visit had taken place. The visitors noted that within the documentation submitted prior to the visit it was not always clear how the learning outcomes were to be met and therefore did not clearly communicate these requirements to trainees, and practice placement educators. From the meeting with practice placement educators it was evident that they were unclear as to how the assessment procedures were to be implemented. The visitors were concerned that if the practice placement educators did not have a full understanding of the assessment procedures for the placement then they could not be sure that the trainee was meeting the criteria to complete the placement. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard continues to be met.

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 review the programme documentation to make explicit where and how the learning outcomes linked the following standard of proficiency are assessed:

  - **2b1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions;**

      - **be able to conduct service evaluations**

Reason: As with the condition applied to SET 4.1, the visitors were unclear from the documentation provided prior to the visit of where the above standard of proficiency was addressed in the learning outcomes of the programme. As a result there was also a lack of clarity of where and how the appropriate learning outcomes linked to the standard of proficiency were assessed in the programme.

In discussions with the programme team the visitors were informed that service evaluation was included with the research skills and using approaches in supervision and professional groups. Trainees were also encouraged to do evaluation of placement areas. The visitors considered the response from the

team but felt that the specific requirements of service evaluation, as distinct from research, were not explicitly documented.

The visitors were therefore unclear about how the standard of proficiency was met and how the learning outcomes ensure that trainees completing the programme can meet the relevant standards of proficiency. The visitors therefore require the programme team to demonstrate within the programme documentation how the learning outcomes are assessed thereby ensuring that trainees can meet this standard of proficiency when completing the programme.

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that measurement of student performance is objective for the assessment of the practice placement to ensure that the trainee is fit to practice.

Reason: Through their reading of the documentation the visitors were unable to determine how the standards of proficiency were to be met on placement. Currently there was no direct training or guidance which provided the practice placement educators with information on marking the trainees objectively or criteria against what a trainee should be marked and assessed on. It was therefore unclear to the visitors if the practice placement educators would be marking equally and consistently across all trainees.

In the meeting with the programme team a discussion took place around placement assessment and the training of practice placement educators in marking trainees to ensure they are able to practice. The programme team reported that there will be a clearer system of marking in the clinical handbook for practice placement educators to assess a trainee appropriately.

To ensure that this standard is met the visitors would like to receive revised documentation that clearly shows how practice placement educators will assess a trainee on placement to ensure that the trainee is fit to practice.

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 revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors noted discussions with the programme team that outlined that changes were being made to the assessment regulations in line with HPC requirements. However, from the evidence presented at the visit the visitors could not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not enable them to be eligible to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding aegrotat awards and that this is clearly accessible to trainees.

David Packwood
Robert Stratford
Jacqueline Campbell