

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Essex
Programme name	MSc Speech and Language Therapy (pre registration)
Mode of delivery	Full time accelerated
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Speech and language therapist
Date of visit	19 - 20 March 2013

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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. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Speech and language therapist' or 'Speech therapist' 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 9 May 2013. At the Committee meeting on 9 May 2013, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures 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 - 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 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 programmes - Post Graduate Diploma in Speech and Language Therapy, MSc Physiotherapy (pre registration) and Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy. The education provider, the professional bodies and the HCPC 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 HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the professional body outline their decisions on the programmes status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Anthony Power (Physiotherapist) Lucy Myers (Speech and language therapist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	20
First approved intake	September 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2013
Chair	Peter Luther (University of Essex)
Secretary	Kirstie Sceats (University of Essex)
Members of the joint panel	Adam Brown (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and External Panel Member) Martin Colley (Internal Panel Member) Tery Killick (Internal Panel Member) Alan Wyatt (Internal Panel Member)

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"/>
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 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 condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 56 of the SETs have been met and that a condition should be set on the remaining SET.

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 made a recommendation 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.

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 revise advertising materials for the programme to clarify whether a relevant degree is an essential or a desirable entry requirement.

Reason: The visitors noted the documentation provided prior to the visit and the programmes online advertising materials indicated an entry requirement for the programme was “a relevant degree”. Upon discussion with the programme team it was indicated the programme would admit persons who did not have a relevant degree, and an example was provided of a successful application of a student with a previous qualification unrelated to one of the specified areas of study “psychology; language and linguistics; social science; biological sciences; medical sciences or equivalent” (Recruitment and selection process and strategy - Appendix ASLT Information Flyer). The visitors considered further clarity should be provided to applicants and potential applicants about whether a relevant degree was an ‘essential’ requirement or a ‘desirable’ one to ensure that when making informed decisions about whether to apply for a place on the programme or not, all the necessary information is available. The visitors require the education provider to revise the advertising materials to clarify whether a relevant degree is an essential or a desirable entry requirement for the programme.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider continue to monitor equality and diversity through the admissions procedures and continue to make efforts, where possible, to increase the diversity of the cohorts.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied this standard is met. The visitors noted the programme’s cohorts have a tendency to be from a particular profile which they identified as being not unusual for this profession. The visitors recommend the programme team continue to monitor the equality and diversity of applicants and those admitted onto the programme. The visitors recommend the programme team use this to continue to identify, where possible, if further efforts can be made to increase the diversity of the cohorts through admissions.

Anthony Power
Lucy Myers