Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Nottingham
Programme name	Top Up Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Forensic psychologist
Date of visit	12 – 13 January 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 14 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 'Forensic 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 20 May 2010. At the Committee meeting on 20 May 2010, the programme was approved. 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. 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 visit also considered a different programme: Top Up Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology. 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, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Emcee Chekwas (Forensic psychologist) George Delafield (Forensic/Occupational psychologist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Paula Lescott
HPC observer	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	5
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2010
Chair	Thomas Schroder (University of Nottingham)
Secretary	Sheila Templer (University of Nottingham)
Members of the joint panel	Molly Ross (British Psychological Society) Lucy Kerry (British Psychological Society) Deepak Anand (British Psychological Society) Liz Gilchrist (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	☐	☐	☒

The HPC did not review External examiners' reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

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)	☒	☐	☐

The HPC met with students from MSc and PhD Health and Occupational psychology programmes, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 47 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 10 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for 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 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 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 review the programme documentation and advertising materials for the programme (including website information) to follow the guidance provided in the HPC "Regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers".

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, HPC 'approves' educational programmes; we do not 'accredit' programmes. It should also be made clear throughout all documentation that HPC approval of a programme does not automatically lead to HPC registration for those who complete the programme but rather to 'eligibility to apply for HPC registration'. Finally, there was some confusion in the programme documentation in relation to the roles and terminology attributed to the regulator and professional body. The education provider must ensure that references to the roles and requirements of professional bodies and regulatory bodies are accurate and up-to-date.

In order to provide students with the correct information to make an informed choice about whether to join the programme and to prevent confusion for students on the programme the programme documentation must be amended.

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 the policy on student consent and ensure that the participation required in the programme and the protocols used to gain consent for this participation is clearly articulated to students.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the policy for obtaining consent from students was unclear. Following discussions with the programme team it was apparent that students would be expected to participate in group and role play activities in the programme. The visitors need to receive further evidence in the form of a consent policy, the method of obtaining consent (such as a consent form), and details of how students are informed of the participation requirements in the programme to ensure that this standard is being met.

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 submit documentation which clearly articulates how the learning outcomes of the programme are linked with the

standards of proficiency to demonstrate how students who successfully complete the programme meet these standards.

Reason: From the documentation submitted it was not always clear how the learning outcomes demonstrated that standards of proficiency were being met in the programme, and how this information was clearly communicated to students, practice placement educators and the education provider. Within the programme documentation learning outcomes had been linked to the BPS key roles and in some cases the standards of proficiency, but this was not consistent throughout the documentation. Therefore it was not always clear that meeting the standards of proficiency was a requirement for successful completion of the programme. This was reflected in practice placement assessment documentation that did not consistently reference HPC standards. The visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to include reference to HPC's Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: In the documentation submitted there were various references to HPC codes or standards but the correct title of HPC's Standards of conduct, performance and ethics was not listed. In addition to this there were instances in the documentation where references were made to the codes of conduct of the British Psychological Society and the education provider, but not to the HPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Therefore the visitors require the programme documentation to be corrected to name the correct HPC document. Additionally the HPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics should be referenced where applicable to conduct and ethics matters in the programme in order to direct students to the standards that HPC expects of them once they have joined the profession.

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

Condition: The education provider must clearly articulate the mechanisms utilised to ensure that practice placement educators receive appropriate programme specific training.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team and placement providers it was clear that there were plans to finalise the arrangements for preparing practice placement educators for supervising students on the programme once the visit had taken place. These plans included training the supervisors on the programme requirements and finalising the documentation to be utilised by supervisors.

The visitors require further evidence that demonstrate the plans for delivering programme specific training to supervisors, the details of the commencement

date of this training and the content of the planned training. Finalised placement documentation must be submitted that demonstrates clear guidelines for supervisors to follow, and details the education providers' plans to ensure continued support for the supervisors after training. Finally, the visitors require the education provider to clearly articulate the mechanisms they plan to use to ensure consistency in assessments amongst practice placement educators.

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 submit documentation which clearly articulates how the learning outcomes of the programme are linked with the standards of proficiency, and demonstrates how students and practice placement educators are fully prepared on the requirements of the placements in the programme.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team and placement providers 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 demonstrated that standards of proficiency were being met in the programme, and therefore did not clearly communicate these requirements to students, practice placement educators and the education provider. The learning outcomes had been linked to the BPS key roles and in some cases the standards of proficiency, but this was not consistent throughout the documentation. This was reflected in practice placement assessment documentation that did not consistently reference HPC standards. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being 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 submit documentation which clearly articulates how the learning outcomes assessed on the programme are linked with the standards of proficiency to demonstrate how students who successfully complete the programme meet these standards.

Reason: From the documentation submitted it was not always clear how the learning outcomes assessed demonstrated that the standards of proficiency were being met in the programme, and how this information was clearly communicated to students, practice placement educators and the education provider. Within the

programme documentation learning outcomes had been linked to the BPS key roles and in some cases the standards of proficiency but this was not consistent throughout the documentation. Therefore it was not always clear that meeting the standards of proficiency was a requirement for successful completion of the programme. This was reflected in practice placement assessment documentation that did not consistently reference HPC standards. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly show throughout that the exit award from the programme does not contain references to an HPC protected title.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit it was apparent that the exit award for the programme contained a HPC protected title for this profession. Following discussions with the programme team prior to the visit it was agreed that the exit award title should change. The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to update the exit award title to demonstrate that this standard is met.

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 articulate the policy on aegrotat awards to state that they do not provide eligibility for inclusion onto the Register, and demonstrate how this information is clearly communicated to the students.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors found it difficult to determine the assessment regulations for the programme and how these are conveyed to students so that it is clear that aegrotat awards would not enable students to be eligible to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that this standard is being met.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that external examiners appointed to the programme must be HPC registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail in the external examiner recruitment policy. The visitors were

happy with the planned external examiner arrangements for the programme but need to see evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider includes information regarding criminal convictions checks and health requirements in all of the programme advertising material.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors felt that overall the information provided to applicants of the programme was clear. They felt that applicants would benefit from additional information in the programme advertisement material around the criminal convictions checks and health requirements for the programme.

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 that the education provider includes references regarding equality and diversity policies in the programme advertising material.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors felt that overall the information provided to applicants of the programme was clear. They felt that applicants would benefit from additional information in the programme advertisement material around the equality and diversity policies followed by the education provider, and the provision of links for applicants to gain further information on this area.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider reviews the placement management systems as the number of placements and associated organisations increase on the programme.

Reason: From the documentation submitted and discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that there was a clear structure and management system in place for dealing with the placement organisations and ensuring the continued relationship between the education provider and practice placements. The visitors recommend that the education provider continues the ongoing commitment to active management of the placement organisations by reviewing these arrangements periodically to ensure their continued effectiveness. The visitors felt that this review would be useful once the number of placements increased, to ensure that the process remained appropriate.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider should consider revising the course handbook detail around programme attendance to clearly articulate the requirements and prevent potential confusion for the students.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors felt that the attendance requirements for the programme were clearly articulated. There was one area in the course handbook that the visitors felt could potentially cause confusion in relation to the attendance of the Doctorate component of the course. In discussions with the programme team, it became apparent that the optional attendance of teaching offered by the Graduate School would not impact on compulsory block teaching, or the content of the programme. The visitors felt that this section of the handbook could be made clearer to avoid potential confusion for students.

George Delafield
Emcee Chekwas