HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Birmingham City University
Name of programme(s)	DipHE Operating Department Practice (South West), Birmingham City University, full time
Approval visit date	10 August 2017
Case reference	CAS-12042-F6C2R5

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Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards
We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

How we make our decisions
We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Julie Weir	Operating department practitioner
Nick Clark	Operating department practitioner
Prisha Shah	Lay
Tamara Wasylec	HCPC executive
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the approval visit
There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Nick Morton	Chair	Birmingham city university – education provider
Clare Portlock Eleanor Statham	Secretaries	Birmingham city university – education provider
Dawn Parsons	External panel member	University Campus Suffolk – academic advisor

| Andi Sambrook | External panel member | University of Surrey – academic advisor |

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	DipHE Operating Department Practice (Royal Devon and Exeter)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Operating department practitioner
First intake	01 January 2018
Maximum student cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01871

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment.

The education provider informed HCPC that it intends to start up a "flying faculty" to provide provision for ODP students in the south west of England. The proposed programme will comprise of students studying the BCU programme at Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust (RDENT), who will provide placements throughout the programme.

Although this programme will take significant elements of the existing BCU programme, as it will be delivered at a new site, with different facilities and placement areas, it is considered a new programme.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers and educators	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that 52 of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 05 October 2017.

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 the programme documentation, including advertising materials to clearly articulate to applicants any additional costs that students may be liable to pay when on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors could not see how the education provider informs potential applicants about the requirement to travel and the costs that students will have to pay as a result of taking a place on the programme. In the programme team meeting and in discussion with students the visitors heard there are costs that the students pay that are not stated in the admissions information, such as travel costs that must be paid when on the programme. The visitors therefore require additional evidence to identify how the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require about all costs incurred by the student, so they can make an informed choice to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the criteria that is used to assess applicants' command of English and how applicants are made aware of the criteria.

Reason: In their reading of the documentation, the visitors noted that applicants are required to sit literacy and numeracy tests as part of the admission procedure. In discussions with the students the visitors heard that students did not sit a literacy and numeracy test when they applied for a place on the programme. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard that applicants will not be required to sit a literacy and numeracy test. However, applicants will be required to hold a minimum of three GCSEs at grade C or above and must include English language, to be considered for a place on this programme. Due to the disparity in the information provided, the visitors require further evidence that clarifies the entry criteria used to assess an applicant's command of English. The visitors also need to see how this is information is communicated to potential applicants to ensure the information provided to applicants clear and consistent.

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

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the relevant guidance issued by HCPC. For example, the visitors were referred to page six of the student handbook where it is stated that successful completion of the programme leads to "eligibility to register" rather than eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register. The statement is incorrect and inaccurate and may mislead students and provide an incorrect impression of the HCPC as a statutory regulator. Additionally, the visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider contained inaccuracies and information that is not applicable to students on this programme. For example, the course flyer refers to placements in Birmingham rather than placements in Devon and Exeter and there was reference to the "welcome week" which takes place in Birmingham for students on a different programme. As such, the visitors noted that some of the information provided is not applicable to the students on this programme. The visitors also noted that the staff contact details were not fully completed, in the documentation provided and could not ascertain how students would be aware of how to contact those staff members. Within the programme handbook, the visitors noted that a weblink to the assessment regulations is yet to be inserted, as such the visitors could not determine how students would know how to access the assessment regulations. The programme team noted that the documentation requires updating so that the information is accurate and relevant to the students on this programme. The visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation and ensure the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for students on this programme. 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 is met.

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the student support system in place when on placement.

Reason: The visitors noted on page thirteen of the SW Hub APG approval document, that the head of department and the programme lead will act as link tutors by carrying out six and three visits to placements in year one, respectively. The visitors noted that the number of visits would decrease in years two and three. However, in discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that the number of visits to placements by a link tutor would be less than stated in the documentation. Due to the disparity in the information provided, the visitors require clarity around the commitment from the link tutors regarding how often placement visits will be conducted each year of the programme and how this is communicated to practice educators and students.

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.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how attendance is monitored, the consequences for poor attendance and how this information is communicated to students.

Reason: In a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the attendance requirement across the programme is one hundred per cent. However, in discussion with the programme team the visitors could not determine the process in place that addresses concerns about student attendance, which falls below the attendance requirement. The visitors also could not determine how it would be enforced and what, if any, repercussions there may be for students who fail to attend. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence of the attendance policy and the associated monitoring mechanisms and how this is communicated to students. They also require further evidence to demonstrate how students are made aware of what effect contravening this policy may have on their ability to progress through the programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence as to what training practice placement educators are required to undertake and how this training prepares them to act as practice placement educators for students on this programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and in discussions with the programme team, the visitors were aware that practice educators must complete mentoring training. The visitors also noted that the education provider uses a rating system for monitoring which practice educators have undertaken training. However, the visitors could not determine, from the information provided, what the training covers, how it is appropriate for practice educators supervising students on this programme and whether it is mandatory to complete this training prior to supervising student on this programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the education provider communicates and ensures that the mandatory training requirements for all practice educators are met. This evidence should also articulate what this training covers to ensure that it is appropriate in preparing practice educators to supervise students on this programme in the placement setting.

Recommendations
We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider reviews the suitability of the study skills support service provided to students on this programme.

Reason: In a review of the documentation and discussions with the programmes team, the visitors noted that study skills support is made available to students on this programme. The service is based at Birmingham City University and students on this programme would be able to access this support via email, phone call and skype. As such the visitors were satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors would recommend the education provider keep under review the accessibility and appropriateness of this service for students based in Devon and Exeter.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 23 November 2017 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.