

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Brunel University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Physiotherapist
Date of visit	12-13 April 2011

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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 'Physiotherapist' or 'Physical 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 2011. At the Committee meeting on 25 August 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 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 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 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 education provider and the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Katie Bosworth (Physiotherapist) Fleur Kitsell (Physiotherapist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	96 Full time 24 Part time
First approved intake	1 March 1993
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 September 2011
Chair	Derek Milligan (Brunel University)
Secretary	Sally Roberts (Brunel University)
Members of the joint panel	Kate Hone (Internal Panel Member) Brian Mase (Internal Panel Member) Jill Ramsay (External Panel Member) Sally Gosling (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists – Day 1) Jill Tolfrey (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists – Day 1) Gwyn Owen (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists – Day 2) Joan Kennedy-Lundy (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists – Day 2)

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	<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 HPC 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 number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 4 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 revisit the programme documentation, including advertising materials to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation.

Reason: In the programme information submitted by the education provider the visitors noted some instances of out-of-date terminology which did not fully comply with the advertising guidelines issued by the HPC. This included references to students being eligible to apply for 'state registration' (Course handbook p28) and references to registering with the HPC as a 'chartered' physiotherapist (Course handbook p6). The term 'state registered' is no longer used by the professions we regulate and the term 'chartered' physiotherapist should not be used in conjunction with the HPC. There was also references to the HPC requiring students to complete a certain number of practice hours (Course handbook p7&11) and that upon registration with the HPC students would have a 'license to practice' (Course handbook p.24). The HPC does not set any requirements on a programme such as number of practice hours and does not grant a 'license to practice'. The visitors considered the terminology used to be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require the programme and admissions documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology throughout. This will ensure that applicants have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme and that the programme information is clear about HPC requirements for registration.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide details of the Placement Management Partnership (PMP) system and identify if and how the change from the current Physiotherapy Placement Information Management System (PPIMS) will impact on how the programme's placements are approved and monitored.

Reason: From the documentation provided, and in discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that from September 2011 the system used by the programme team to manage practice placements will be changing. This is a change from a profession specific, Physiotherapy Placement Information Management System (PPIMS), to a multi-disciplinary, Placement Management Partnership (PMP) system. The visitors noted that the PMP system is not yet in place and details of this system were not available at the visit. However, this meant that the visitors could not be sure that the PMP system will enable the programme team to maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements. Therefore, the visitors require further details of the PMP system. The visitors require the programme team to identify if the change of system will change how practice placements will be approved and monitored and

if it does, how these changes will affect the way placements are approved and monitored.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must make sure that the programme documentation clearly articulates the requirements for student achievement and progression in the clinical assessment periods and in the professional development assessment block.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that the programme team will be revising the programme documentation to meet the requirements of the university panel. In doing so the programme team will re-map the learning outcomes of the programme to the key areas of assessment, in particular the clinical assessment periods and the professional development assessment block. As the programme documentation is to be revised the visitors are unclear as to how the revised documentation will clearly specify the requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme. If the requirements for this are not clearly articulated this could lead to a student lodging a successful academic appeal and completing the programme even if the programme team have concerns over their fitness to practice. The visitors therefore require evidence of the revised programme documentation to identify how the requirements for student progression and achievement are articulated. In this way the visitors can be sure that students have the information they need in order to understand what is required of them to successfully progress through the programme.

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 amend the programme documentation to clearly specify that at least one external examiner must be from the relevant part of the HPC Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. The visitors were happy with the current external examiner arrangements after discussions with the programme team. However this standard requires that the assessment regulations of the programme must state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed. Therefore the visitors require evidence that HPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the programme documentation, to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

Fleur Kitsell
Katie Bosworth