

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Canterbury Christ Church University
Validating body	Canterbury Christ Church University University of Greenwich
Programme name	Pg Dip Speech and Language Therapy
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Speech and language therapist
Date of visit	29 – 30 September 2011

Contents

Contents	1
Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	5
Recommended outcome	6
Conditions.....	7
Recommendations.....	12

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 'Speech therapist' or 'Speech and language 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 22 February 2012. At the Committee meeting on 22 February 2012 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 and validating body validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered a different programme – Pg Dip Speech and Language Therapy, full time with the award from University of Greenwich. The programme is jointly validated by Canterbury Christ Church University and University of Greenwich, with both education providers contributing to the programme through management and resources. The programme is delivered as one cohort; however, half the cohort receives an award from Canterbury Christ Church University and half from University of Greenwich.

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 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 Pg Dip Speech and Language Therapy, full time with the award from University of Greenwich. 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, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Lorna Povey (Speech and language therapist) Martin Duckworth (Speech and language therapist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Lewis Roberts
HPC observer	Victoria Adenungba
Proposed student numbers	25 per cohort (split between Canterbury Christ Church University and University of Greenwich)
First approved intake	1 February 2007
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 January 2012
Chair	Christopher Stevens (Canterbury Christ Church University)

Secretary	Samantha Ray (Canterbury Christ Church University)
Members of the joint panel	Richard Brown (Internal Panel Member) Fiona McArthur-Rouse (Internal Panel Member) Irena Chojnacka (Internal Panel Member) Stephen Naylor (Internal Panel Member) Lucy Myers (External Panel Member) Tracey Marsh (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists)

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 49 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 8 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 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 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

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the audit tools and supporting mechanisms used to approve and monitor placements which ensure that resources in all practice placement settings are effectively used to support student learning.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that practice placement providers within the NHS must complete a self-assessment using the 'National Standards for Practice-Based Learning audit' developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. The programme team and the practice placement educators also discussed with the visitors the use of independent sector placements and future plans to develop role emerging placements. The programme team stated that there is an audit form which they can use for practice placements that are not within the NHS.

However the visitors did not have access to the audit tools, and as such did not have sufficient evidence of how the programme team ensures that each placement setting effectively uses the resources available to support student learning. Therefore the visitors require further evidence, including the audit tools, of how the programme team ensures that placements effectively use the available resources to support student learning in all settings.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the audit tools and supporting mechanisms used to approve and monitor placements which ensure that resources in all practice placement settings effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that practice placement providers within the NHS must complete a self-assessment using the 'National Standards for Practice-Based Learning audit' developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. The programme team and the practice placement educators also discussed with the visitors the use of independent sector placements and future plans to develop role emerging placements. The programme team stated that there is an audit form which they can use for practice placements that are not within the NHS.

However the visitors did not have access to the audit tools, and as such did not have sufficient evidence of how the programme team ensures that each placement setting effectively uses the resources available to support student learning. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme team ensure that placements have sufficient resources in place at all placement settings.

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the formal mechanisms in place which ensure that all practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that a number of informal mechanisms are used to check and monitor the quality of practice placements. These include looking at the placement environment during a 'mid-placement visit' and ensuring that all placements are evaluated. This is in addition to the self-assessment audit tools that all placement providers are expected to complete.

However, the visitors did not have access to the audit tools and noted that the informal mechanisms, outlined through discussions at the visit, did not demonstrate a consistent approach to auditing practice placements. As this was the case the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider takes responsibility for ensuring that all practice placement learning is conducted in a safe and supportive environment. The visitors therefore did not have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that mechanisms are in place to ensure all settings, including NHS, independent sector and role emerging placements are safe and supportive. To be sure that this standard is met the visitors require evidence of the formal mechanisms, including the audit tools, that the education provider uses to ensure that consistent judgements are made on whether placements provide safe and supportive environments.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the audit tool and supporting mechanisms used to approve and monitor all placements.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that the programme team ensure that practice placement providers, within the NHS, complete a self-assessment using the 'National Standards for Practice-Based Learning audit' developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. They also noted that there is an audit tool which the programme team can utilise for practice placements outside of the NHS and that that all independent sector and role emerging placements would be visited by a member of the programme team to ensure suitability. The visitors were also clear that a number of informal mechanisms are used by the programme team to check and monitor the quality of practice placements, including looking at the placement environment during the mid-placement visit and ensuring that all placements are evaluated.

However, the visitors did not have access to the audit tools and as such they did not have enough evidence, from discussions at the visit and from the documentation provided, to demonstrate that a thorough and effective system is in place for the approval and monitoring of placements. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the auditing process along with any policies and

procedures to support the approval and monitoring placements in all settings, including NHS, independent sector and role emerging placements.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of how they ensure that all placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place, and how these policies are implemented and monitored.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors note that practice placement providers within the NHS must complete a self-assessment using the 'National Standards for Practice-Based Learning audit' developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. They also noted that there is an audit tool which the programme team can utilise for practice placements outside of the NHS.

However, the visitors did not have access to these audit tools and as such did not have enough evidence of the systems or processes that the programme team use to ensure that all placements have equality and diversity policies in place and that these policies are implemented and monitored. Therefore the visitors require further evidence, including the audit tools, to demonstrate how the programme team ensures that placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place and how they check that the policies are implemented and monitored.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the audit tool used to approve and monitor placements which ensures an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff are in place at all practice placement setting.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors note that practice placement providers within the NHS must complete a self-assessment using the 'National Standards for Practice-Based Learning audit' developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. They also noted that there is an audit tool which the programme team can utilise for practice placements outside of the NHS.

However, the visitors did not have access to these audit tools and as such did not have enough evidence of the systems or processes the programme team use to ensure that all placements, including those in NHS, independent sector and role emerging settings, have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place. The visitors require further evidence, including the auditing tools, to demonstrate how they ensure that placement providers have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to supervise students and ensure they gain the experience they require.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence to demonstrate how the programme team ensures that all practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training, including refresher training.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and in discussions with the programme team and practice placement educators the visitors noted the role of the 'Key Placement Educator' and the 'Placement Educator' within the programme. 'Key Placement Educators' are a named member of the placement education team and the contact person for the student and the academic staff. 'Placement Educators' are speech and language therapists registered with the HPC and/or other health professional and/or other relevant worker. Within the 'Final Revalidation Document' on page 48 the visitors noted that the role of the Placement Educators is "...of fundamental importance in enabling students to develop their clinical skills..."

The visitors also noted that the programme team delivers a 'Placement Educator Course' and annual refresher training days for practice placement educators. The visitors are satisfied that the course content is appropriate and allows practice placement educators to develop their skills in student education and become familiar with the expectations of the programme and assessment process. From discussions with the programme team it was stated that only the 'Key Placement Educators' must mandatorily undertake training. However on page 4 of the 'Final Revalidation Document' it states that "...the SLT placement educator is expected to complete a preparation course".

From the documents submitted and from discussions with the programme team the visitors did not have enough evidence to demonstrate that all practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training, including refresher training. The visitors require clarification of the arrangements in place for practice placement educator training. The visitors require clarification that outlines who is required to undertake mandatory practice placement educator training, whether both 'Key Placement Educators' and 'Placement Educators' must attend this training prior to receiving students on placement or just 'Key Placement Educators'. If only 'Key Placement Educators' are mandatorily required to undertake the training then the visitors require further evidence that highlights the mechanisms in place that ensures that all 'Placement Educators' are informed of the specific requirements of the programme, including the programme learning outcomes, to ensure that they are able to appropriately support student learning.

In addition to the 'Placement Educator Course' the visitors noted that the programme team offer an annual refresher training session to practice placement educators. This session is not mandatory and the programme team have no defined period in which practice placement educators must refresh their knowledge of supervision and the programme. The visitors require evidence to show how they will provide on-going refresher training to all practice placement educators.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence to demonstrate how the programme team ensures that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors note that practice placement providers within the NHS must complete a self-assessment using the 'National Standards for Practice-Based Learning audit' developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. The visitors also note that the programme team stated that all speech and language therapists working within the NHS must be HPC registered and the expectation would be that service managers would check this. However, the programme team and the practice placement educators also discussed with the visitors the use of independent sector placements and future plans to develop role emerging placements. The programme team stated that there is an audit form which they can use for practice placements that are not within the NHS.

However, the visitors did not have access to these audit tools and did not have enough evidence, from discussions at the visit and from the documentation provided, of the systems or processes in place to ensure that practice placement educators in all settings are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the systems or process to demonstrate how they ensure that practice placement educators at all placements, including NHS, independent sector and role emerging settings are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Recommendations

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider constructing and documenting a process that demonstrates how they guarantee and monitor the quality of teaching from specialist visiting lecturers.

Reason: From discussions the visitors noted a number of mechanisms utilised by the programme team to quality assure the teaching of specialist visiting lecturers. Examples included organising a pre-meeting with the specialist visiting lecturer, proof reading learning resources and students providing informal feedback after the session. However, the visitors also noted that these mechanisms were often applied informally and inconsistently. The visitors therefore suggest constructing and documenting a process that demonstrates how they guarantee and monitor the quality of teaching from specialist visiting lecturers. The visitors suggest that the programme team may want to formally evaluate sessions delivered by specialist visiting lecturers, and felt that this could be used as a useful continuing professional development tool for specialist visiting lecturers.

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 programme team should consider setting, and communicating, a defined threshold at which point they will automatically contact a non-attending student on the programme and further emphasise within the programme documentation the consequences of non-attendance.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors felt that the attendance requirements for the programme were clearly articulated. The visitors also noted that the programme deal with issues of student non-attendance on a case-by-case basis. However, through discussions it was highlighted that the programme team does not have a defined threshold at which point they would automatically contact a non-attending student. The visitors felt that communicating to students a clear, defined, threshold for non-attendance at which point the programme team would automatically contact a student, would enhance consistency and transparency. The visitors also felt that having a clear defined policy for non-attendance would protect the programme team from appeals should they be required to escalate issue of attendance in terms of a student's professional related conduct.

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.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider revisiting the programme documentation to further highlight where the profession specific aspects of the standards of proficiency relating to knowledge, understanding and skills are covered within the programme.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied that this standard is met and that all of the standards of proficiency are covered within the curriculum. However, from reviewing the programme documentation the visitors did note that the indicative module outlines do not clearly highlight where within the programme the profession specific aspects of the standards of proficiency relating to knowledge, understanding and skills are covered. The visitors recommend that the programme team may want to review the programme documentation to further highlight these areas.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider reviewing the protocols in place for using practice placement educators who are not HPC registered speech and language therapists, to ensure they are appropriately experienced, qualified and have received training relevant to the practice placement.

Reason: Through discussions with the programme team the visitors noted the future plans to expand the use of independent sector placements and plans to develop role emerging placements. The visitors noted discussions where it was stated that in the future students could be supervised by practice placement educators from outside of the health sector, including teachers. The visitors recommend that the programme team may want to review the protocols in place when using placement educators who are not HPC registered speech and language therapists, to ensure they are appropriately experienced, qualified and have received training relevant to the practice placement. The visitors also note that the programme team may want to investigate other models of supervision, such as arms-length supervision to ensure that students always have profession specific supervisor access.

Lorna Povey
Martin Duckworth