

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	New College Durham
Validating body / Awarding body	Leeds Metropolitan University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Podiatry
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Chiropodist / Podiatrist
Relevant entitlement(s)	Local anaesthetic Prescription Only Medicine
Date of visit	18 – 19 November 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 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Chiropodist' or 'Podiatrist' 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 at the education provider. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 31 March 2011. At this meeting, the Committee confirmed the ongoing approval of the programme. This means 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 an HPC only visit. The education provider and validating body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair for the visit.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Anne Wilson (Chiropodist/Podiatrist) Paul Blakeman (Chiropodist/Podiatrist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Mandy Hargood
Proposed student numbers	35
Initial approval	1 September 2006
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2011
Chair	John Ellison (New College Durham)

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 ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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.

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 and admissions documentation to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation.

Reason: The programme and admissions information submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by the HPC. In particular, there were instances of references to students on completion of the programme being able to apply for registration with the HPC rather than being 'eligible to apply for registration with the HPC.' Also the programme specification on page 2 made reference to HPC National Occupational Standards. The HPC does not have National Occupational Standards, these standards relate to the Skills for Health competencies. The visitors considered the terminology 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.

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 submit revised documentation that includes information regarding their interim awards for this programme.

Reason: In the report of the validation event held by the education provider with the validating body, and the professional body in June 2010, it stated in the footnote that the step off awards for the Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education and the BSc Health Studies, could lead to "membership of the HPC". During the meeting with the programme team it was clear that the step off awards were not programmes that led to eligibility to apply for registration with the HPC and that this document had not been provided by the programme team.

The visitors considered that as this document was a public facing document it could lead to a misunderstanding as to what qualifications were eligible for registration with the HPC. Therefore the visitors would like to receive revised documentation that removes the statement relating to the step off awards leading to registration with the HPC and ensure that it is clear that only the BSc (Hons) Podiatry full time is the award that leads to eligibility to apply for registration with the HPC.

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.

Recommendations

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider exploring opportunities with the validating institution for the programme to develop interprofessional and multi-disciplinary professional experience for the students.

Reason: Whilst the visitors were content that this standard was met, they considered that there were greater opportunities for inter professional learning for the students by developing the relationship with the other health profession programmes at the validating institution as well as medical specialist departments in the NHS acute trust and, other Universities in the region, and especially the validating University that offer other Health and Medicine awards

In the meeting with the students, the students expressed a desire to forge closer links with Leeds Metropolitan University to broaden their experience. The visitors considered that the enthusiasm expressed by the students should be utilised positively, especially as there was little opportunity for the students to gain interprofessional or multi-disciplinary skills within the New College Durham Campus.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the formal monitoring of the student experience on the practice placements to ensure that placement practice experience is consistent and equitable as far as practicable to all students equitable.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met, and that the students were experiencing the number, duration and range of practice placements to allow them to complete the programme.

In the meeting with the students, the students said that they kept a diary of the placements they attended. The visitors asked if this was reviewed by the programme team and the response was no as it was for their own reflection. A view was expressed by the students that their placement experience could be different and the visitors felt that in order for the institution to ensure the experience is consistent and equitable this experience should be monitored. The opportunity for this exists through the students existing placement diary they keep.

The visitors recommended that the programme team review the diaries to keep under review the placements taken by students. By doing this the visitors considered that the education provider would be aware of the placements being undertaken by students and that student experience of placements was equitable.

Anne Wilson
Paul Blakeman