

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	Swansea University
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology)
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Hearing aid dispenser
<b>Date of visit</b>	6 – 7 March 2013

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## Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Hearing aid dispenser' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care 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 4 July 2013. At the Committee meeting on 4 July 2013, 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 HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC 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 an HCPC only visit. The education provider 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 and secretary for the visit.

## Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Elizabeth Ross (Hearing aid dispenser) Patricia Fillis (Diagnostic radiographer)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Jamie Hunt
HCPC observer	Louise Devlin
Proposed student numbers	8
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Mary Paget (Swansea University)
Secretary	Jayne Walters (Swansea University)

## Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Further quality assurance documentation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service user and carer involvement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as external examiners' reports have not been produced for this programme as the programme is new. The HCPC reviewed external examiner reports from the approved BSc (Hons) Audiology programme.

During the visit the HCPC 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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Audiology programme, 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 50 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 7 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.

## 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 revise programme documentation to ensure information is accurate and consistent and that terminology used is reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that there were inconsistent references to the programme title through the documentation. For example, the cover page of the Programme handbook refers to the programme title as 'BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology)'. Elsewhere in this document, and in other documentation, such as the education provider's prospectus for 2013, the programme is referred to as 'BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology)'. The visitors also noted there were statements through the documentation that upon graduating from the programme students would be 'eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC', but it was not always clear as which profession. The visitors also noted that the education provider's prospectus stated there were '50 weeks of placement'. Other documents indicated planned placement provision for the programme is 61 weeks, which was reinforced by the programme team. Upon discussion with the programme team, the visitors understood that there were two proposals for the programme when the prospectus was produced, and that one proposal would have included 50 weeks of placement. The proposal that was agreed has 61 weeks of practice placements, however. This information is potentially misleading to prospective students, as they may need to attend placements for longer than expected. Therefore, the visitors require evidence that future advertising materials produced state the correct number of placement weeks, and require the documentation to be revised to ensure consistency of terminology.

### **3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that they have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place before the programme commences in September 2013.

**Reason:** From communication with the education provider before the visit, and from discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that one of the experienced members of staff will shortly be leaving the programme team. This individual was joint programme leader for the programme and was also the module lead for several modules. At the visit, the senior team discussed a timetable for replacing this member of staff, and stated that they expected to have someone in post by the start of the new programme. The visitors were not given a formal recruitment plan however, so they were unable to make a judgement about whether the new member of staff will have appropriate skills and experience to ensure that this standard is met. Therefore, the visitors require evidence of how the programme and senior team will ensure that the new member of staff is appropriately qualified and experienced, and how they will ensure a new staff member is in place before the programme starts in September 2013.

### **3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.**

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure that all students have sufficient access to core texts throughout the programme and in all settings.

**Reason:** From discussion with the students, the visitors noted that access to the main recommended texts from the module descriptors could be problematic, especially when on placement and during busy times of the year. Students may be placed several hours away from the main Swansea campus for extended periods. The visitors noted that the programme team is proactive with providing IT support to students when on placement, and has given students access to other institution's libraries. However, the students did not feel that they always had access to the main recommended texts when on placement, and were not clear of all of the resources available to them. The students were also concerned that there was limited access to the main recommended texts in the main campus library, as there were low numbers of certain books (for example Dillon (2012) Hearing Aids), especially at busy times of the year, such as when dissertations are being written. The visitors require the education provider to address the shortfall of student access to the main recommended texts in all settings, and at all times of the year.

### **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 revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate procedures for students withholding consent from participating as a service user in practical or clinical teaching.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that there is a consent form in place for students participating as service users, which is completed on an annual basis. This form states: 'if you feel for any reason that you are unable at any given time to undertake a practical skill, seek the guidance of the programme manager immediately'. The students and programme team were clear that students could withhold consent on an ad hoc and informal basis in practical and clinical teaching. The visitors were not clear how this may impact on the student who withholds consent. There was no method of formally recording students who opt out of these sessions, and no policy to address how the education provider manages any impact of students opting out of these sessions. The visitors require information which details formal procedures for students opting out of participating as service users in practical and clinical teaching, which also demonstrates how the programme team ensures that there is no detriment to the academic or clinical progression of students who choose to opt out.

### **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 ensure that all parties are clear about the attendance policies, and how and whether students should make up any missed time.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied that there were monitoring systems in place for student attendance. However, the visitors were unclear how the education provider manages students making up time when it is missed. For example, the programme team stated that it is their responsibility to make decisions about students making up time when on placement. The students, however, suggested that practice placement

educators make this decision. The visitors were also unclear how the education provider ensures consistency across these decisions. The students noted that decisions about making up time could depend on which practice placement educator the student was dealing with. The visitors also noted that the programme handbook states that 'attendance is COMPULSORY AT ALL Clinical Placements and other practical classes' (page 28), but then states that 'in the event of sickness or unplanned absence from placement you MUST telephone the placement department within 30 minutes of the start of the working day to explain why you will be absent and to discuss how long you are likely to be absent for.' This information is inconsistent and could be confusing to students when considering attendance. The visitors were also unclear whether time would need to be made up in these situations. The visitors therefore require information which demonstrates the education provider's ownership of the making back time policy, and clarification of the attendance policies in the programme handbook.

#### **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 state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors could therefore not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not lead to eligibility to apply to the Register as a hearing aid dispenser. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding aegrotat awards and that this is accessible to students.

#### **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 provide further information to demonstrate how they provide profession specific support to external examiners if they are not HCPC registered hearing aid dispensers.

**Reason:** From discussions with the senior team, and from the documentation provided, the visitors were satisfied that the current external examiner is appropriately experienced as an external examiner. They noted that, although their background was in audiology, they were not an HCPC registered hearing aid dispenser. The visitors were unclear of the support mechanisms in place for the external examiner in areas where they have limited experience of the profession. Therefore, the visitors require further information to demonstrate how they provide support to external examiners if they are not HCPC registered hearing aid dispensers.



## Recommendations

### **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 ensures students fully understand how to resolve any issues with accommodation when on placement before they are in the placement setting.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied that there are policies and procedure in place to manage the problems that students have with their accommodation while on placement, and therefore that this standards is met. The visitors were also clear that the education provider gives students advice about the policies and procedures in place. In discussions with the students, the visitors also noted that the students understood what to do if there were any issues on placements. The students were only familiar with these procedures from experience with problems with accommodation, however, rather than from the advice given by the education provider. The visitors recommend that the programme team strengthens the advice it gives to students, so they understand policies and procedures for problems with accommodation before they need to address any issues.

### **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 visitors recommend that the education provider continues to develop its links with practice placements in the private setting.

**Reason:** From the documentation and from discussions with the programme team, the visited noted that there is currently no opportunity for students to work formally and directly with a hearing aid dispenser in the private setting when on placement. The visitors noted the work that the education provider is doing to formalise contact time for students with hearing aid dispensers in the placement setting. Although the visitors were satisfied that this standard is met, they noted that placement experience with a private hearing aid dispenser would be beneficial to students. The visitors recommend that the education provider continues to develop their work in this area, so that students have mandatory contact with hearing aid dispensers in the practice placement setting.

Elizabeth Ross  
Patricia Fillis