

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Bradford
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences (Infection Science)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	4 – 5 January 2012

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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 'Biomedical scientist' 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 29 March 2012. At the Committee meeting on 29 March 2012 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

This visit was the result of the education provider amending their currently approved BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes and reforming them into a new training route. Given the similarity between the approved programmes and the new programme, it was agreed the approval of this programme would incorporate those who enrolled for the September 2011 cohort. Those students will be eligible to apply for registration upon successful completion of the programme with the caveat that the education provider will have to meet all conditions in this report including any conditions the visitors set specifically for the first cohort of students who commenced the programme in September 2011. The education provider plans to recruit students to a generic programme – BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences. During the second year of this programme the students decide which of four pathways they wish to complete. The programme award reflects the pathway title the student has completed. The visitors will recommend approval for this pathway title – BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences (Infection Science)

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 part of a joint event. The professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes: BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences (Cellular Science), BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences (Genetics Science), and BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences (Blood Science). 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. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. 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 professional body, outlines their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Bill Gilmore (Biomedical scientist) Robert Keeble (Biomedical scientist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	30 (across all pathways)
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2011
Chair	Chris Gale (University of Bradford)
Secretary	Sharon Roscoe (University of Bradford)
Members of the joint panel	Betty Kyle (Institute of Biomedical Science) Sarah Pitt (Institute of Biomedical Science)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit, there have been no past external examiners' reports as the programme is new.

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"/>

The HPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme, the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme and the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science - Life Sciences (Genetics Science) programme.

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 46 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 11 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 all programme documentation to ensure that references to students' potential employment are current and that they reflect the requirements for statutory regulation.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation, and in discussions with the students, that graduates for the programme are expected to graduate and work as healthcare science practitioners. In discussions with the programme team, and the placement providers, it was clear that this has been articulated to students in the expectation that this will be a professional role within the NHS by the time these students will graduate. The visitors considered that this could lead to students having unrealistic expectations of a professional role which has not currently been fully defined and utilised by NHS employers. The visitors also noted that students were aware of the requirements of registration with the HPC but were less clear about the process of registration and the use of the protected title biomedical scientist.

In particular the visitors noted instances of incorrect or unclear use of terminology in relation to statutory regulation such as 'The programme is intended to: Provide a Medical Education England Healthcare Science Programme board and IBMS accredited and HPC approved degree which will allow you to gain employment as a Healthcare Scientist Practitioner...' (Programme Specification p4). While correct, this use of terminology could be inferred to mean that HPC is the statutory regulator for healthcare scientists or that the requirements of MEE mirror that of the HPC. The programme documentation also includes such statements as 'Healthcare Scientists and Biomedical Scientists play an essential role in the National Health Service' (Course Handbook p4) which suggest that healthcare scientists are currently employed with the NHS.

The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation to reflect the current situation in regards to potential employment and the requirements for statutory regulation. In this way the visitors can be sure that students are aware of their potential future employment situation and are aware of the requirements for professional regulation when they graduate.

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 provide evidence of the information provided to applicants which articulates the routes through the programme and the employment opportunities for successful graduates.

Reason: In discussion with the students the visitors were clear that the routes through the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science programmes had been clearly

explained to applicants prior to them taking up a place on the programme. The visitors also noted that the students were aware of possible avenues for employment if they successfully completed the programme. However, in discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware that no advertising material or written information had been produced for the healthcare science programmes. As this was the case visitors were unclear as to how the programme team ensures that applicants to the programme have all of the information they require to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. Therefore the visitors require evidence of the information that will be provided to applicants and prospective students about the healthcare science programmes. In particular they require evidence of how applicants will be informed of the differing routes through the programme, the constraints around the availability of placements and what employment opportunities will be open to successful graduates of the programme.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must update the programme rationale and specification to better reflect the provision and the programme's place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, that the statement headed 'Health Care Scientist Training at the University of Bradford' focused primarily on the genetics route through the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science programmes. The other routes through the programme are described as extensions into other areas of the life sciences. The visitors also noted that in the Course Handbook (p4) and the Programme Specification (p 2-3) that emphasis was placed on Healthcare Science's '...new flexible career structure' and ability to '...enable patients to receive safer care, [and] faster diagnosis'. In discussion with the senior team and the programme team it was made clear to the visitors that the BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science programmes would be delivered alongside existing biomedical science programmes and in many cases share teaching. This model of provision has been designed to make the new programmes more efficient and ensure that they remain viable in the future. It was also made clear that it was the intention of the programme team to continue to produce graduates who would be eligible to become biomedical scientists. The visitors highlighted that this was not reflected in the programme rationale which heavily emphasised the new healthcare science programmes, particularly the genetics pathway. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation to more accurately reflect the programmes' place within the education provider's business plan. The documentation should also ensure that the aim of producing graduates who will work as biomedical scientists should also be articulated.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide details of the arrangements in place which articulate how the education provider will move from the provision of applied biomedical sciences programmes to the healthcare science programmes.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine how students who are following the current applied biomedical science programmes will either complete their studies or transfer onto one of the new healthcare science programmes. In discussion with the programme team it was highlighted that this was being done in a phased way and that it would affect students at different stages of the programmes in different ways. It was anticipated that this transfer between the previous programmes and the new could take up to six years to be fully realised. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the transfer of provision, and students, from the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes to the new healthcare science programmes is anticipated to work. In this way the visitors can determine how the education provider is continuing to ensure that all students will be able to successfully complete a full programme of study and become eligible to apply to the Register.

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 programme team must provide further detail of how they monitor student attendance at the relevant learning and teaching activities on the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that there were clear statements which identify where student attendance is mandatory on the programme. The visitors also noted that there were mechanisms in place for which monitoring student attendance at practical and clinical teaching sessions. However, in discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware that, due to education provider policies, similar mechanisms were not in place to monitor student attendance at taught elements of the programme. This was a result of having large numbers of students, from several different programmes, attend some of the modules associated with this programme which made the use of a register unfeasible. As a result of this the visitors were unclear how the programme team ensures that students can meet all of the standards of proficiency (SOPs) associated with the taught elements of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team monitor students' attendance at taught elements of the programme and what action is taken if students consistently fail to attend.

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Condition: The education provider must provide further detail of the formal procedure in place to deal with any concerns about students' profession related conduct and how it may be implemented.

Reason: In discussion with the students and with the programme team it was made clear that there are processes in place which deal with concerns about students' profession-related conduct. However, the visitors could find only limited information in the programme documentation about the formal procedure for dealing with any issues around professionalism. The visitors were subsequently unclear about how the criteria for the referral of any issue to a disciplinary committee were applied and how students were informed of this. They were also

unclear about how an issue may progress to a disciplinary committee if the Head of School deemed it necessary. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the formal process in place to deal with any issues around students' profession-related conduct. This evidence should also highlight how students are made aware of this process and what criteria may be used to determine if the formal process is implemented.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the criteria used to approve and monitor practice placements and in what circumstances a placement would not be used.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware of the processes involved in approving and monitoring practice placements. This involved initial visits prior to students attending the placement and subsequent visits during student's time on placement. This is complimented by monitoring processes which gather information from the placements, and the attendant students, each year. However, from the documentation provided, the visitors could not determine what criteria are used by the education provider to approve and monitor practice placements. The visitors could also not determine under what circumstances the programme team would not utilise the offer of a practice placement or what action would be taken if a placement was deemed unsuitable. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the criteria used by the programme team to ensure that a practice placement site can provide students with suitable placement experiences. The visitors also require an indication of the action that would be taken if serious concerns were raised about a placement and what circumstances would mean that a placement site would not be used. In this way the visitors can be sure that the programme team maintain thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must identify how students are made aware of their employment status when on placement and what limits are imposed on their time in placement to ensure that they obtain the required experience.

Reason: In the documentation provided the visitors noted that 'Students on placements will be subject to the same terms and conditions as trainee staff in the laboratory' (Course Handbook p7). In discussion with the practice placement providers it was highlighted that this was the intention as this is what happens for students on the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programmes. The

visitors also noted, in discussion with the programme team, that students, while eligible for the same terms and conditions of employment as trainee staff, would not be able to take pro-rata holiday entitlements. This is because any holiday taken while on placement may impair students' ability to meet the required learning outcomes. However, the visitors could not identify how students and practice placement providers were informed that the terms and conditions which students may be able to receive should not be applicable where they negatively impact on the placement experience. The visitors were also unclear as to how any entitlements students may receive were made available to all students in order to provide equality of experience. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team ensure that students and practice placement providers are fully aware of the requirements regarding any potential employment benefits. This evidence should also include how the programme team will manage any disparities between employment benefits to ensure all students get a similar placement experience. In this way the visitors can be sure that this standard is met.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must clarify further the role and responsibilities of practice placement educators, particularly in stage 3 of the programme, and highlight how they are prepared to undertake this role.

Reason: The visitors noted in the programme documentation, and in discussion with the programme team, that external expertise will be used to teach some of the content, particularly that which is specific to the different routes through the programme. This involvement of external staff increases in stage 3 of the programme and extends to supervision of students' research projects while they are undertaking practice placements. The visitors were made aware that the practice placement providers were aware of this requirement and that they felt that the practice placement educators would be able to fulfil these roles. However, the visitors could not determine what these roles would be and what specific teaching and learning responsibilities would be taken on by staff external to the programme, particularly in stage 3. The visitors were also unclear about how the programme team were going to prepare practice placement providers and educators to fulfil these roles and quality assure any teaching and learning delivered externally. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the specific roles and responsibilities that will be taken on by any external staff and what preparation for these roles will be provided by the programme team. In particular the visitors require further evidence of what the requirements will be for those practice placement educators supervising stage 3 research projects and how they will be prepared to undertake this role.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must provide further detail of the expected placement experience at each stage of the programme and how this information is provided to fully prepare practice placement educators and student for placements.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were clear that by the end of the programme student would have to have undertaken a series of placement experiences and demonstrated a defined set of competencies. For each placement a placement agreement is signed by the placement educator, student and member of the programme team which details what competencies need to be demonstrated by the student during that placement. However, the visitors were unclear about how the demonstration of the ability to meet the competencies demonstrated a clear progression through the programme and how this progression was communicated to students and practice placement educators. The visitors could also not determine what broad set of competencies each student would be expected to have met after each placement block to enable them to progress to the next stage of the programme. The visitors therefore require further information about the broad set of competencies the programme team would expect a student to have met after each placement block. This evidence should also include information about how students and practice placement educators are informed of these requirements to prepare them for placement. This is to ensure that students and practice placement educators are aware of the requirements for successful completion of each placement block and that this standard is met.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how the different tools used to assess students while on placement will be implemented in to ensure successful students meet all of the relevant standards of proficiency.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussion with the programme team that students will have to complete both the Medical Education England (MEE) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment portfolios while on placement. The MEE assessment is online while the IBMS assessment is paper based and both require evidence to demonstrate how students have met certain competencies while undertaking practical experience. However, the visitors were unclear about how the assessment tools would work in relation to one another if a student failed one assessment but passed the other. From the documentation

provided the visitors were clear that the MEE online tool ‘...broadly uses the generic Health Professions Council Standards of Proficiency...’ (Programme Specification p11) while the IBMS portfolio requires each HPC SOP for biomedical scientists to be evidenced. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the assessments work together and what the implications would be if a student fails one assessment and passes the other. In particular the evidence should detail how this assessment strategy will ensure that a student who successfully graduates from the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

6.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how the use of both the Medical Education England (MEE) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment tools for students’ placement experience will work in practice.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussion with the programme team that students will have to complete both the Medical Education England (MEE) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment portfolios while on placement. The MEE assessment is online while the IBMS assessment is paper based and both require evidence to demonstrate how students have met certain competencies while undertaking practical experience. However, the visitors were unclear about how the assessment tools would work in relation to one another if a student failed one assessment but passed the other. From the documentation provided the visitors were clear that the MEE online tool ‘...broadly uses the generic Health Professions Council Standards of Proficiency...’ (Programme Specification p11) while the IBMS portfolio requires each HPC SOP for biomedical scientists to be evidenced. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the assessments work together and what the implications would be if a student fails one assessment and passes the other. In particular the evidence should detail how this assessment strategy provides a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external frameworks can be measured.

6.3 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how the different tools used to assess students will ensure that professional aspects of practice are integral to students’ successful completion of practice placements.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussion with the programme team that students will have to complete both the Medical Education England (MEE) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment portfolios while on placement. The MEE assessment is online while the IBMS assessment is paper based and both require evidence to demonstrate how students have met certain competencies while undertaking practical experience. However, the visitors were unclear about how the assessment tools would work in relation to one another if

a student failed one assessment but passed the other. From the documentation provided the visitors were clear that the MEE online tool ‘...broadly uses the generic Health Professions Council Standards of Proficiency...’ (Programme Specification p11) while the IBMS portfolio requires each HPC SOP for biomedical scientists to be evidenced. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the assessments work together and what the implications would be if a student fails one assessment and passes the other. In particular the evidence should detail how this assessment procedure ensures that professional aspects of practice are integral to the successful completion of the practice placement elements of the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further clarification of the requirements for progression of students through the programme, particularly if student’s fail to complete the placement aspects of the programme successfully.

Reason: The visitors noted in discussion with the programme team that students will have to complete both the Medical Education England (MEE) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assessment portfolios while on placement. The MEE assessment is online while the IBMS assessment is paper based and both require evidence to demonstrate how students have met certain competencies while undertaking practical experience. However, the visitors were unclear about how the assessment tools would work in relation to one another if a student failed one assessment but passed the other. From the documentation provided the visitors were clear that the MEE online tool ‘...broadly uses the generic Health Professions Council Standards of Proficiency...’ (Programme Specification p11) while the IBMS portfolio requires each HPC SOP for biomedical scientists to be evidenced. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the assessments work together and what the implications would be if a student fails one assessment and passes the other. In particular the evidence should detail how students are made aware of the requirements for achievement and successful completion of the practice placement elements of the programme. The visitors can thereby be sure that students are aware of the requirements for achievement within the programme and that this standard can be met.

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 provide further evidence of where in the programme documentation it is clearly articulated that an aegrotat award will not provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not identify where it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. The visitors were also unclear as to how this information is clearly communicated to students. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate where in the programme documentation it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. In this way the visitors can be sure that this information is available to students and that this standard is met.

Recommendations

4.7 The delivery of the programme must encourage evidence based practice.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the mechanisms designed to ensure that students understand what evidence based practice is.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided the visitors noted that evidence based practice is embedded in the learning outcomes of several modules. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. However, in discussion with the students the visitors were aware that while the students described the process of using evidence to inform practice they were unclear that this could be termed 'evidence based practice'. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team review the current mechanisms by which evidence based practice is encouraged and taught to reinforce what evidence based practice is and where students will be using it in the programme. In this way the programme team may be able to further embed the term within the teaching and learning activities of the programme.

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 and highlighting the interprofessional nature of the programme further.

Reason: The visitors noted a statement in the documentation provided (SETs mapping document) that students on this programme do not undertake any specific inter-professional learning. The visitors were therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, in discussion with the programme team it was clear that students will share taught modules with students from the biomedical science programmes and also other programmes within the university. It is also the case that the students on this programme will be working with biomedical scientists and healthcare scientists from several different specialisms. The visitors recommend that the programme team considers what the term interprofessional learning may cover and how the positive aspects of this can be emphasised in this programme. In this way the programme team may be able to enhance students understanding of the benefit of the acquisition of skills pertinent to autonomous practitioner, to aid future work in a multi-professional environment.

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 keeping the timetabling of placements under review to ensure that students on the programme can meet all of the relevant learning outcomes required in the time available.

Reason: In reviewing the programme documentation the visitors were made aware of the number, duration and range of practice placements that students were required to undertake in order for them to achieve the required learning outcomes. They were therefore satisfied that this standard has been met. However, from this review they also noted that the majority of the placement experience will be taking place in time allocated for holiday in the education provider's academic calendar. In discussion with the programme team, and with students, the visitors clarified that any additional time required in placement would also have to be taken in these periods. The visitors noted that there were several weeks either side of the of the 'block' of time allocated for practice placement during which any additional experience on placement could be timetabled. The visitors recommend that this timetable is kept under review by the programme team to ensure that students who may require additional time in placement can complete this in the time allocated for the programme. In this way the programme team can ensure that all students have the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes associated with practice placement experience in the time available.

Robert Keeble
Bill Gilmore