

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	University of Bristol
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Audiology
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of HPC Register</b>	Hearing aid dispensers
<b>Date of visit</b>	6 – 7 July 2011

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## Executive summary

The Health Professions Council (HPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HPC is a health regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HPC currently regulates 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Hearing aid dispenser' 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. The education provider has until 29 August 2011 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 13 October 2011. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

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 13 October 2011. At the Committee meeting on 6 December 2011 the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

## Introduction

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider as the Hearing Aid Dispenser profession came onto the register in April 2010 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. 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 HPC 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 HPC visitors and profession	Hugh Crawford (Hearing aid dispenser) Richard Sykes (Hearing aid dispenser) Jacqueline Landman (Lay visitor)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	30
First approved intake	1 September 2004
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	1 September 2011
Chair	Alex Marsh (Bristol University)
Secretary	Norma Meechem (Bristol University)

## 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 47 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 10 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 two 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 all of the programme documentation, and any advertising material, to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate and reflective of HPC regulation.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that elements of the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, there were instances of incorrect or out-of-date terminology in reference to HPC 'accrediting' the programme (e.g. p12 of the 'Year 1 Handbook' and p11 of the 'Year 2-4 Handbook'). The HPC does not accredit education programmes we approve education programmes. The visitors also noted statements (e.g. p31 of the 'Year 1 Handbook' and p30 of the 'Year 2-4 Handbook') in the documentation such as 'Students graduating from the programme will be eligible for state registration with the Health Professions Council as a Clinical Physiologist (Audiology)'. The term 'state registered' is out-of-date and no longer applies to registration with the HPC. It is also the case that completing the programme would allow students to apply for registration with the HPC as a hearing aid dispenser but not a clinical physiologist (Audiology). The visitors also noted that within the programme documentation the titles BSc Audiology and BSc (Hons) Audiology were interchanged whilst referring to the same programme. The visitors considered these uses of terminology to be inaccurate and potentially misleading to applicants and students. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect or out-of-date terminology throughout. This is to provide clarity for those on, or applying to, the programme and to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how the programme will continue to be resourced and delivered until the programme ceases running.

**Reason:** In discussion with the senior team it was made clear that a decision had been made to no longer admit students to the programme and that the final cohort commenced the programme in 2010. The visitors noted in further discussion that the education provider has put in place a 'Teaching out plan' which outlines how the programme will be delivered until it closes. To determine that the programme will continue to be resourced and delivered at its current level, until the programme ceases, the visitors require evidence of how the teaching out plan will be implemented. This would enable the visitors to therefore determine how the programme will be delivered and how the resourcing of the programme will be suitably maintained. In this way the visitors can be sure that the programme will continue to meet the standards of education and training throughout the 'teaching out' period.

### **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 implement the consent form which has been developed to cover the practical aspects of the programme.

**Reason:** Contained within the documentation submitted prior to the visit the visitors noted that there was a consent form included to gain students' consent to participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching. However the document provided was labelled draft. In further discussions it was articulated that the consent form would not be implemented by the programme team as students could not take aural impressions on each other due to insurance constraints. However, the visitors articulated that the form covered practical teaching other than the taking of aural impressions in particular otoscopy and involvement in counselling style sessions. Therefore the visitors considered that the form was an appropriate formal method of gaining students' consent and require a copy of the final version of the form and information about how it will be utilised. In this way the visitors can be sure that there are appropriate formal protocols in place to gain students consent and that this standard continues to be met.

### **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.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how the delivery of the profession specific content ensures that those who successfully complete the programme can meet the relevant standards of proficiency.

**Reason:** Through the documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors were aware that the programme has learning outcomes which, if met, will enable students to practice safely and effectively in a number of professions. In discussion with the programme team it was made clear that the learning outcomes associated with the AUDI30009 module were designed to provide students with profession specific knowledge about hearing aid dispensers. However, the visitors could not discern, from the documentation provided, how the teaching and learning methods utilised on AUDI30009 enabled students to meet the associated learning outcomes. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to identify how the teaching and learning employed on module AUDI30009 enable students to meet the associated learning outcomes. In this way the visitors can be sure the content of the module relates to the learning outcomes and that students who successfully complete the programme can meet all of the standards of proficiency for their part of the register.

### **4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how the delivery of the hearing aid dispenser specific teaching and learning ensures that the curriculum remains relevant to current practice.

**Reason:** From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted that the AUDI30009 module contained elements of 'hearing aid technology' learning and teaching. The programme team further clarified that formal teaching about the different technologies was delivered in AUDI30009 while students gained further experience of different hearing aids while on placement. However, the visitors could not discern how the teaching and learning about these developments in these technologies was delivered. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to identify how the programme team ensure that students are learning about the different hearing aid technologies available. In this way the visitors can be sure that the curriculum remains relevant to current practice and that this standard continues to be met.

#### **4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how students on the programme understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

**Reason:** From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted several references to the HPC within the AUDI30009 module. In discussion with the programme team the visitors also noted that this was the module in which the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE's) were addressed. However, from the documentation and the discussions the visitors were unable to find precisely how the HPC SCPEs were addressed and how the programme team ensures that students understand the implications of these standards, including how and where they apply. The visitors therefore require additional evidence to identify how the programme team ensure that students on the programme understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence of how the skills and knowledge specific to hearing aid dispensers is adequately addressed through the delivery of the programme.

**Reason:** In reviewing the programme documentation, the visitors were clear that the programme was designed to train audiologists, clinical physiologists and hearing aid dispensers. Through discussion with the programme team the visitors understood the ethos behind the programme was to teach students holistically and not differentiate between the different possible career paths until year four. In further discussions the visitors noted that the profession-specific skills and knowledge of hearing aid dispensers was primarily dealt with in the AUDI30009 module. However, the visitors were unclear as to what teaching and learning was included in this module and how this module addressed key areas of professional knowledge required to practice as a hearing aid dispenser. The visitors therefore require further evidence to identify what professional skills and knowledge is delivered in this module. In this way the visitors can ensure that while the

programme has a great deal of 'interprofessional learning' the skills and knowledge, specific to hearing aid dispensers, is adequately addressed.

**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 evidence to demonstrate how the assessment methodology of the programme ensures that those who successfully complete the programme have met the relevant standards of proficiency.

**Reason:** Through the documentation and discussions at the visit the visitors were made aware that the assessment strategy of the programme will enable students to practice safely and effectively in a number of professions. In discussion with the programme team it was made clear that the assessment of the AUDI30009 module is designed to ensure that successful students can meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for hearing aid dispensers. However, the visitors could not discern, from the documentation provided, how the assessment methods utilised on AUDI30009 ensured that students meet the associated learning outcomes. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to identify how the assessment employed on module AUDI30009 ensures that successful students to meet the relevant learning outcomes. In this way the visitors can be sure the content of the module relates to the learning outcomes and that students who successfully complete the programme can meet all of the standards of proficiency for their part of the register.

**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 revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that any exit awards from the programme do not provide eligibility for admission to the HPC Register.

**Reason:** From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that anyone achieving an exit award other than the BSc (Hons) Audiology would not be eligible to apply for registration with the HPC. However, in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail regarding the exit awards from the programme. This could lead to the assumption that these awards may allow students to apply to the Register for HPC registration when they do not. Therefore, visitors need to see evidence that the documentation clearly articulates that any exit awards from this programme would not confer eligibility to apply to the Register on any student, to ensure that this standard can be met.

**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 revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate the requirement for at least one external examiner appointed to be, unless other arrangements are agreed, from the relevant part of the HPC Register.

**Reason:** In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail included in programme's documentation regarding the recruitment of external examiners. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner arrangements for the programme. However, this standard requires the programme's assessment regulations to include the HPC requirements for the appointment of external examiners. Therefore the visitors need to see evidence that HPC requirements regarding the recruitment of external examiners have been included in the programme documentation to demonstrate that this standard continues to be met.

## Recommendations

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider monitoring the resources available to the programme team in order for them to deliver more practical teaching in an academic setting.

**Reason:** From the tour of the resources and discussions at the visit the visitors felt that the resources available effectively supported the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. They were therefore satisfied that this standard continues to be met. However, in discussion with the students it was highlighted that opportunities to learn, and practice, practical skills in the academic setting were limited and that some students felt that more practice would benefit their placement experience. The visitors noted in discussion with the programme team that students could sign up for specific time to practice in the skills labs and have this time supervised if staff were available. However, it was also noted that students were unable to take aural impressions on one-another due to issues with insurance coverage. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider monitors the provision of resources to enable students to undertake more practical lessons in an academic environment. In this way students will have additional time to acquire the skills required for professional practice and learn how theory is put into practice before going on placement.

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

**Recommendation:** The programme team should consider delivering some of the hearing aid dispenser specific content earlier in the programme.

**Reason:** In discussions with the students and the programme team the visitors were made aware that a great deal of the profession specific teaching and learning is delivered in the fourth year of the programme. In discussion with the students it was clear that some would have preferred to receive some information about dispensing hearing aids in the independent sector earlier in the programme. The visitors also highlighted that by concentrating all of the profession specific content in the fourth year some students may not have sufficient time to avail themselves of the different career paths open to them once they graduate from the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team consider delivering some of the content specific to hearing aid dispensers earlier in the programme. In this way the programme team may be able to ensure that students are aware of the professional roles and career paths open to them and have time to investigate them fully.

Richard Sykes  
Hugh Crawford  
Jacqueline Landman