Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of East Anglia
Programme name	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	22 – 23 November 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 'Practitioner psychologist' or ' Clinical psychologist' must be registered with us. The HPC keep a register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 10 May 2012. At the Committee meeting on 10 May 2012 tthe 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 psychology profession came onto the register in July 2009 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 part of a joint event. The education provider validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The education provider, the professional body and the HPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider and the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Sabiha Azmi (Clinical psychologist) Kevin Woods (Educational psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
HPC observer	David Christopher
Proposed student numbers	21 per cohort once a year
First approved intake	January 1992
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	October 2012
Chair	Sara Connolly (University of East Anglia)
Secretaries	Alison Rhodes (University of East Anglia) Hannah Coman (University of East Anglia)
Members of the joint panel	Nicola Spalding (Internal Panel Member) Isabel Hargreaves (External Panel Member) Molly Ross (British Psychological Society) Helen Dent (British Psychological Society) Matthias Schwannauer (British Psychological Society)

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	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐
Joint HPC approval / BPS accreditation and UEA validation event appendices	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 4 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must ensure the programme team are appropriately consulted with the outcomes and any resulting actions that come from the 'psychology review' that has been recently undertaken.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the education provider has recently undertaken a review of the psychology programmes being delivered. The aim of this review was to consider the programmes and make recommendations on the future of the programmes. In discussion with the senior team it was indicated the review was not at a point where the contents could be discussed although the review recommendations were in the process of being passed on to the vice chancellor. The senior team meeting reassured the visiting panel that the contents of the review were not going to have a negative impact on the programme. In light of both the uncertainties from the outcomes of the review and the reassurance from the senior team, the visitors considered there needed to be arrangements in place to ensure the programme team are appropriately consulted with any conclusions of the review and are involved with the implementation of any outcomes that may impact on the management of the programme. The visitors require further evidence that demonstrates the education provider will ensure the programme team are consulted with the conclusions from the review and are involved with the implementation of any outcomes.

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 provide further evidence to demonstrate there are arrangements in place within the programme to be able to manage staff changes.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated there will be future changes to the staffing for this programme in particular the programme leader arrangements. During discussion with the programme team the visitors asked how staffing changes would be managed. Along with the other changes the visitors noted (the administrative changes and the psychology review outcomes) the visitors considered changes to the programme leadership could have a cumulative negative impact on the effectiveness of the delivery of the programme. The programme team responded with a description of the processes for recruiting new staff to fill spaces in the programme team. The visitors considered more formal arrangements in place to deal with staffing changes would be an appropriate way to ensure the quality of the programme is maintained through any staffing changes that may occur. The visitors therefore require further evidence that demonstrates there are arrangements in place to manage any changes that occur within the programme team.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate they are monitoring and effectively managing the new integrated administrative support system for this programme.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the programme had recently undergone a change to the administrative support. The programme has gone from having one named administrative support role to an integrated administrative support approach. The integrated administrative support unit provides support for a number of different programmes with no named point of contact. During discussion with the senior team it was highlighted they were aware of some problems which were attributed to being only four months into the new system. Further meetings with the trainees and placement providers indicated they had experienced multiple problems with this new system. The trainees identified problems with receiving expenses claims, with receiving communications about coursework feedback and with cancelled teaching slots not being communicated to them. The placement providers identified problems with not being able to talk to someone when they needed to, with confusing messages about the practice educator training days and with incorrect emails informing them they had been confirmed as external speakers for the programme. The programme team highlighted their concerns regarding the administrative support. The programme team were concerned if the current problems relating to the new system were not rectified there would be later problems with maintaining the relationships with the placement providers and with the trainees.

The visitors are aware this system is new and as such there may be a period of readjustment with the administrative management of the programme. The visitors consider the administrative support given to the programme is key to the successful delivery of the programme. The visitors also considered the students' professional development to be supported through the services provided including the monitoring of their attendance, the coherent relationships with the placement providers and in helping identifying where the programme team may need to help any students. In light of the important role the administrative services play in the delivery of the programme and the fact this is a very new development the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate the new system is being monitored. The visitors also require evidence that the monitoring of this system will lead to appropriate actions if necessary to counteract any negative impacts this system will have on the programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must revise programme documentation to clearly articulate the assessment requirements for the programme in relation to failing a placement and progression through the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included information about assessment and progression through the programme. In discussion with the trainees it was clear they were uncertain as to how their progression through the programme would be affected by failing the oral presentation element of the placement evaluation. The trainees repeated what is included in the handbook, that oral presentations could be repeated if necessary (Programme Handbook, p53), however also indicated this could only occur for two placement oral presentations. If any further placement presentations were failed the trainees thought they could not progress through the programme and this would constitute outright failure of the programme. The programme handbook had a statement that was unclear whether it referred to the number of oral presentations which could be repeated or the number of times an oral presentation could be repeated, "No more than one additional presentation will be allowed" (Programme Handbook, p53).

In discussion with the programme team the assessment regulations were clarified as follows; if a trainee fails more than one placement at first attempt this constitutes an outright fail of the programme. A pass of placement is made up of the passing of the oral presentation as well as a pass from the supervisor at the placement. A trainee can retake an oral presentation. There is no limit to the number of oral presentations that can be retaken however each oral presentation can only be retaken once. If an oral presentation is failed at the second attempt the exam board and external examiner will be required to assess whether the trainee can progress.

The visitors understood the procedures however found this to be confusing if it is not articulated clearly enough, which was confirmed with the trainees who did not fully understand the procedures. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the programme documentation to ensure it clearly articulates the requirements for the assessment at placement in terms of how many times a trainee can retake an oral presentation, how many oral presentations can be retaken, how the overall placement pass is attained and how this links through to the trainees' progression through the programme.

Recommendations

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider forming a strategy for how the programme team will consistently implement equality and diversity to widen access for the profession.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team the visitors noted evidence of an equality and diversity policy and evidence of the education provider implementing and monitoring this policy. The visitors did however note that the programme team's ideas for widening awareness of their programme did not have a formal implementation plan for the programme. The visitors suggest the programme team consider formulating an equality and diversity strategy at a programme level to ensure that the work that is currently being undertaken around equality and diversity is conducted in a consistent, transparent and measured way.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider how they communicate the processes for feedback to the trainees.

Reason: Programme documentation provided prior to the visit detailed the programme committees and representatives on these committees. During discussion with the trainees the visitors heard about the range of ways in which to feedback to the programme team and heard examples of how they had fed back into the programme team on issues of timetabling, assessments and support mechanisms. The visitors heard from the trainees that changes had occurred as a result of this feedback, however it was clear that not all years of the programme were aware of the changes having been made as a result of the feedback they had given. The programme team corroborated this discussion and additionally stated a new process had been put into place to give a written response on the trainees feedback so they would be aware of how changes were related to anything they had put forward to the programme team. The visitors considered this to be an excellent way of closing the feedback loops, however in light of the trainees comments suggest the programme team look at how they communicate this process to the trainees so all know what to expect from the feedback processes.

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

Recommendation: The programme team may wish to consider how the current placement approval and monitoring processes can be applied to new placement settings outside of the NHS.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit detailed the placement approval and monitoring processes for the programme. The visitors also heard that all of the placement settings currently are both NHS settings and non-NHS settings with longstanding connections to the programme and there are no new settings being sought. When considering the future for the programme and the profession the visitors felt it would be beneficial for the programme to consider how their existing processes for approval and monitoring of placements can be adapted for new non-traditional settings for placements to ensure the placement suitability for trainees in the future.

Sabiha Azmi
Kevin Woods