

Health Professions Council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Essex
Name and titles of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences (Integrated)
Mode of Delivery (FT/PT)	FT
Date of Visit	18-19 January 2007
Proposed date of approval to commence	September 2007
Name of HPC visitors attending (including member type and professional area)	Robert Munro (Biomedical Science – Academic) Mary Popeck (Biomedical Science – Retired Clinician)
HPC Executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Osama Ammar
Joint panel members in attendance (name and delegation):	Paul Scott (Chair) (Dean - Faculty of Science of Engineering Dean) Brigitte Palmer (Secretary) Kirstie Sceats (Observer) Debi Roberson (Faculty of Psychology) Gerry Davis (Faculty of Health and Human Science) Jo Jackson (Faculty of Health and Human Science) Katherine Guays-Atkins (Student) Alan Wainwright (IBMS representative) Jim Cunningham (IBMS academic representative) Peter Ruddy (IBMS clinical representative)

Scope of visit (please tick)

New programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Major change to existing programme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit initiated through Annual Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>

Confirmation of meetings held

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior personnel of 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students (current or past as appropriate)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Confirmation of facilities inspected

	Yes	No	N/A
Library learning centre	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IT facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Confirmation that particular requirements/specific instructions (if any) of the Education and Training Committee that have been explored e.g. specific aspects arising from annual monitoring reports.

Requirement (please insert detail)	Yes	No	N/A
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Proposed student cohort intake number please state	30
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ALL CONDITIONS MET

The following summarises the key outcomes of the Approvals event and provides reasons for the decision.

CONDITIONS

SET 2 *Programme admissions*

The admission procedures must:

2.1 give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make, or take up the offer of a place on a programme

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to remove the word 'clinical' from the programme title.

Reason: Clinical Science is also a HPC regulated profession and there is some concern that, through the use of the word 'clinical' in the title, an applicant might not understand that this programme will lead to eligibility to register as a Biomedical Scientist.

2.2.1 apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of written and spoken English;

Condition: The programme team must redraft and resubmit the materials used to advertise the programme to clearly indicate that although entry to the programme will be possible at either IELTS 6.0 or 6.5, entry to the HPC Register will require an IELTS score of 7.0.

Reason: The Visitors felt the entry requirement to the programme was sufficiently clear but that a student might not take steps to ensure their language proficiency developed unless the requirement for entry to the register was also clear.

SET 3. *Programme management and resource standards*

3.2 The programme must be managed effectively.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate how University of Essex has taken responsibility for the management of the placement year.

Reason: Through discussion, it became apparent that the placement environments were managed effectively. However, much of this management was performed by placement staff and the Visitors felt University of Essex needed to take ownership of all placement arrangements to ensure parity of student experience.

3.8 The facilities needed to ensure the welfare and well-being of students must be both adequate and accessible.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate how University of Essex has taken responsibility for the management of the placement environment. In particular, this should include information on how student welfare and well-being is supported in placement.

Reason: Through discussion, it became apparent that there was some disparity in student experience on placement and the Visitors felt University of Essex needed to take ownership of all placement arrangements to ensure students have equal access to support mechanisms.

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2007-01-26	b	APV	APV	Visitors Report - University of Essex - BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science	Final DD: None	Public RD: None

3.12 The resources provided, both on and off site, must adequately support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate how University of Essex has taken responsibility for the management of the placement environment. In particular, this should include information on how University of Essex ensures the adequacy of resources at placement.

Reason: Through discussion, it became apparent that there was some disparity in student experience on placement and the Visitors felt University of Essex needed to take ownership of all placement arrangements to ensure resources and associated learning opportunities were similar at each site.

SET 5. Practice placements standards

5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

5.9 There must be collaboration between the education provider and practice placement providers.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate the mechanisms University of Essex has in place to approve and monitor placement environments.

Reason: Through discussion it was clear that University of Essex had not formalised the processes they followed to ensure the placement environments met and continue to meet threshold standards for appropriateness. As these processes were not documented, the Visitors did not feel able to determine if the number, duration and range of placements was appropriate to the learning outcomes as it was not clearly documented how University of Essex takes responsibility for approving and monitoring placements.

5.7.5 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of communication and lines of responsibility.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate the role of University of Essex as first point of contact for students and placement staff.

Reason: It became apparent, through shared responsibility between University of Essex and the placement providers, that the Programme Director was not always the primary contact for placement questions and problems. The Visitors felt that University of Essex must document its role in managing the placement experience through a placement co-ordinator on the University staff.

5.9 There must be collaboration between the education provider and practice placement providers.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly articulate the role of University of Essex in the management of practice placements. In particular, the role of University of Essex in the collaboration must be made clear.

Reason: Though collaboration between University of Essex and practice placement providers was evident, the Visitors felt that University of Essex needed to clarify the enhanced role it will play in the collaboration for an integrated biomedical science programme.

SET 6. Assessment standards

6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practise.

6.5 There must be effective mechanisms in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: The programme team must revisit and resubmit the programme documentation to clearly indicate how academic staff members are involved in the moderation of the assessment of the practice portfolio.

Reason: Through discussion, the programme team indicated that moderation was taking place, however, the process was not documented in the definitive documentation. The Visitors felt the process needed to be formalised to ensure assessment standards were quality assured.

Deadline for Conditions to be met: 24th May 2007

Expected dates for submission to ETP/C:

28th March 2007 - Approval of Report

5th July 2007 - Approval of Programme

RECOMMENDATIONS

SET 3. Programme management and resource standards

3.3 There must be a named programme leader who has overall responsibility for the programme and should be either on the relevant part of the HPC Register (for the following professions: arts therapists, biomedical scientists, chiropodists and podiatrists, dieticians, occupational therapists, orthoptists, paramedics, physiotherapists, prosthetists and orthotists and radiographers) or otherwise appropriately qualified and experienced.

Recommendation: The programme leader should seek registration with the HPC through the appropriate route.

Reason: Currently the programme leader is appropriately qualified to undertake the role of managing and developing the programme, however, in attaining registration with the HPC, the inclusion of profession specific skills and knowledge would enhance the programme's potential to develop with the profession.

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

Recommendation: University of Essex should consider the appointment of at least one HPC registered Biomedical Scientist as a full time member of academic staff.

Reason: The input of part time lecturers to the programme ensures that profession specific knowledge is central to the programme. The Visitors felt, however, the programme would benefit significantly from full time members of academic staff who would be better able to dedicate more time to the development and management of the programme.

SET 4. Curriculum Standards

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.

Recommendation: The programme team should make students aware of the standards of the HPC and the IBMS in the first year of the programme.

Reason: Through discussion with students, it became clear that some were not aware of the role of the regulator or the professional body until they had gained practice experience. The Visitors felt although these subjects were included in the summer school that the students needed the information consolidated at an early point in the programme.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice

Recommendation: The programme team should integrate subject matter surrounding the biology of disease into the final year of the programme.

Reason: The Visitors felt the third year of the programme directed students towards research topics with a biological or bio-molecular focus. In order to reinforce biomedical science students' knowledge of the biology of disease, the Visitors suggest this subject matter is integrated into the final year in the Issues in Biomedical Science module or the research project.

SET 5. Practice placements standards

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider applying credit to the placement assessments to further demonstrate the integration of the placement year in the programme.

Reason: The Visitors noted that with a pass/fail criterion the effort and level of attainment in the placement year was currently unrecognised. In particular the Visitors felt the named award referenced the placement learning and therefore should rely on the assessment of the placement in the classification of honours.

Commendations

The Visitors commend the high quality of the documentation submitted for the validation and approval event.

The Visitors commend the evident enthusiasm and commitment of the trainers in the placement environment.

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The nature and quality of instruction and facilities meets the Standards of Education and Training.

We recommend to the Education and Training Committee of the HPC that they approve this programme (subject to any conditions being met).

Visitors' signatures:

Robert Munro

Mary Popeck

Date: 24/01/07

ALL CONDITIONS MET