

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Sunderland
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Cellular Science)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Biomedical scientist
Date of visit	11 – 12 Dec 2012

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'biomedical scientist' must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 27 March 2013. At the Committee meeting on 27 March 2013 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

This visit was the result of the education provider amending their current provision for biomedical science. The education provider will continue to run the BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science programme, which is approved by the HCPC. They will also offer a new training route. Given the similarity between the approved programme and the new programmes, 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.

This visit was part of a joint event. The professional body (the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)) considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Blood Science), BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Genetic Science) and BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Infection Science).

The professional body and the HCPC 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 HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the professional body outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	David Houlston (Biomedical scientist) Peter Ruddy (Biomedical scientist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	20 (includes all specialisms)
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2011
Chair	Mike Wyvill (University of Sunderland)
Secretary	Joanne White (University of Sunderland)
Members of the joint panel	Joanna Andrew (IBMS) Craig Donaldson (IBMS) Alan Wainwright (IBMS)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction to education provider and healthcare science programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cross reference to IBMS and HCPC requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators/mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.

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 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 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 did not make any 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 revisit the programme and admissions documentation to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate, consistent and reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulations.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted a number of instances where incorrect terminology was used. The visitors require the education provider to review the programme and admissions documentation to ensure that it is accurate, current and consistent. For example, the visitors noted a reference within the Practice Placement Handbook to the programme ‘...These objectives will relate to the PTP competencies relevant to your discipline and the HPC Standards of Proficiency for a Health Care Science Practitioner’. The HCPC does not hold Register for health care science practitioners; however it does hold a Register for biomedical scientists. On another occasion the “Audit Tool” for quality control of clinical placement providers had included “HCPC training certificate”. The HCPC do not provide formal practice placement educator training and therefore do not issue training certificates. The visitors therefore require all documents to be thoroughly checked and terminology corrected.

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 review the programme documentation to make clear that upon successful completion of the programme the individual will be eligible to apply for registration as a biomedical scientist with the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors found inconsistent advice about registration with the HCPC in the programme documentation. For example, there were several references in the documentation to ‘registration with the Health and Care Professions Council’, but not specifically as a biomedical scientist. To an applicant, this may cause confusion as they may not have experience with professional regulation. The visitors require further explanation of what registration with the HCPC as a biomedical scientist entails, and why it is important in order to be satisfied that this condition has been met.

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 HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence that they have regulations or policies in place that ensure none of the interim awards available provide eligibility to apply for HCPC registration, and that the programme documentation clearly articulates this.

Reason: The visitors were concerned that the programme and admission documents did not provide enough clarity for students that exit awards do not lead to HCPC registration. Visitors also did not see documentation which defined the programme’s

assessment regulations. The education provider stated in its SETs mapping document that 'The programme team cannot make programme specific regulations and have them approved by the DVC (Academic) unless the HCPC approve the programme. Assuming a successful outcome, these can only be done after the event in December 2012.' However, the visitors require evidence that final draft of programme specific assessment regulations is produced in line with HCPC requirements to be satisfied that this standard is met.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not lead to registration with the HCPC.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit did not state that aegrotat awards do not lead to registration with the HCPC (SETs mapping document SET 6.9). The visitors noted this was not clearly articulated anywhere in the programme documentation and were therefore not satisfied that this SET was met. This SET requires that the programme documentation clearly states that an aegrotat award will not provide eligibility for admission to the Register to avoid any confusion. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation (such as the programme specification document) to be updated to clearly specify that an aegrotat award would not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. This is to provide clarity for students and to ensure that this standard is 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 include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register or agree other arrangements with the HCPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider, there were no procedures in place for the selection of an external examiner, and how education provider makes decisions about who is an appropriate appointment as an external examiner. The visitors will need to see evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate this standard is met.

David Houlston
Peter Ruddy