hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Birmingham
Programme name	Forensic Clinical Psychology Doctorate (ForenClinPsyD)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Practitioner psychologist
Relevant modality / domain	Forensic psychologist Clinical psychologist
Date of visit	28 – 29 June 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 'Practitioner psychologist', 'Forensic 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 9 May 2013. At the Committee meeting on 9 May 2013, the programme was approved. This means the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HPC approval for the first time. 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	Laura Golding (Clinical psychologist) George Delafield (Forensic psychologist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	David Christopher
Proposed student numbers	5 per cohort
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Roy Harrison (28 June 2012) (University of Birmingham) John Tellam (29 June 2012) (University of Birmingham)
Secretary	Rupy Kahlon (University of Birmingham)

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	☐	☐	☒
HPC visit appendices	☒	☐	☐

The HPC did not review a separate practice placement handbook as the documentation does not exist. A separate practice placement handbook has not been produced. The information is included at section C of the programme handbook.

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit. As this is a new programme seeking approval the documentation does not exist.

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)	☒	☐	☐

The HPC met with students from the Clinical Psychology Doctorate (ClinPsyD) and one student from the Doctorate in Forensic Psychology Practice (ForenPsyD), as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

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 48 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 9 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 recommendation 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 develop promotional materials, which give applicants and the education provider all the information required to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: The list of documents provided prior to the visit included reference to a course brochure. However, this was not provided and in discussions the programme team confirmed that a course brochure and other promotional materials had not yet been produced. The visitors noted that in alternate years places on the programme would be funded by a practice placement provider and only available to employees it funded as students. It would therefore be important for the course brochure and promotional materials to make clear who was eligible to apply in any given year. The visitors also noted that there would be no accreditation of prior (experiential) learning mechanism for the programme, which needed to be made clear to applicants in promotional materials. The visitors also considered that the information about the previous experience required by applicants needed further elaboration so it could be communicated to applicants. Consequently, the visitors require the education provider to develop promotional materials, which give applicants and the education provider all the information required to make informed choices about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on the programme. The visitors consider the condition under SET 2.5 to link with this condition.

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must clarify the previous experience required by applicants that will be applied as selection and entry criteria.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included a SETs mapping document, which indicated that applicants would be required to have previous experience or be currently working in a forensic setting. However, in the absence of promotional materials for this programme, it was unclear what the education provider's precise requirements were in relation to prior experience. The visitors need further information about the previous experience the education provider expects applicants to have to be assured that the programme will apply appropriate academic and/or professional standards. This standard also requires that applicants are made aware of the entry criteria for this programme. As such the visitors also require the education provider to further elaborate and clarify its requirements in relation to previous experience to applicants, to ensure that this standard is met. The visitors consider the condition under SET 2.1 to link with this condition.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The education provider must review the programme handbook and other documentation to ensure that it supports student learning.

Reason: The programme documentation provided prior to the visit included a programme handbook. This handbook indicated that the programme would be delivered over a four year period, with the first two years being full time study and the final two years being part time study. However, discussions with the programme team indicated that the education provider intended to restructure the programme and deliver it over four years of full time study. The visitors noted that this change would inevitably lead to some restructuring of the programme and the way it was delivered, which would need to be reflected in the handbook and other documentation. The visitors therefore require the education provider to review the programme handbook and other documentation to reflect the intention to deliver it over four years of full time study to ensure that this material supports student learning.

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 review the programme documentation to show how the learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for clinical and forensic psychologists.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included a programme specification and a programme handbook, which included module descriptions, together with mapping documents showing how the SETs and SOPs were met. The programme is innovative as it is designed to cover the SOPs for both clinical and forensic psychologists. However, as indicated in the condition set against SET 3.8, discussions with the programme team indicated an intention to deliver the programme over four years of full time study instead of the two years of full study plus two years of part time study originally intended. The visitors noted that this change would inevitably lead to some restructuring of the programme and the way it was delivered, which would need to be reflected in the programme documentation. The visitors therefore require the education provider to review the programme documentation, in the light of the intention to deliver the programme over four years of full time study, to show how it ensures that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for clinical and forensic psychologists. The visitors consider the condition under SET 5.2 and 6.1 to link with this condition.

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.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information to demonstrate how it will ensure that there is an appropriate range of practice

placements to support delivery of the programme and achievement of the learning outcomes.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included mapping documents that showed how the SOPs for clinical and forensic psychologists were addressed. The documentation provided information about the practice placement element of the programme. However, it was unclear to the visitors whether the placements available would allow students to gain experience in a range of settings and with a variety of clientele and so achieve all the learning outcomes. Discussions with colleagues from St Andrew's Healthcare, a practice placement provider that would fund students on the programme in alternate years, revealed that this provider could offer experience of working with adults, adolescents and older patients. However, it would be necessary to undertake placements with other providers to gain experience of working with younger children and in the community. The programme team confirmed that the required placements could be provided by a number of other providers, but the visitors were not provided with any information about the range of placements available or the education provider's strategy for ensuring that placements would support all students to meet all the learning outcomes and in so doing the SOPs for both clinical and forensic psychologists. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further information to demonstrate that there is an appropriate range of placements to support students to achieve all the learning outcomes. The visitors consider the condition under SET 4.1 to link with this condition.

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

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to articulate clearly the process for approving and monitoring placements.

Reason: The programme documentation provided prior to the visit included information about the practice placement element of the programme, including the role of the appraisal tutor and the process for monitoring student performance and development. In discussions, the programme team confirmed their intention was to use the appraisal tutor system to visit placements and help to ensure that they provide a high quality teaching and learning experience for students. However, the visitors could not determine how this system would thoroughly and effectively approve and monitor all placements. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence to articulate more clearly the processes for approving and monitoring placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about its strategy for engaging with practice placement providers to ensure that an appropriate number and range of placements are available to students.

Reason: As noted from the separate condition against SET 5.2, the visitors sought clarification about the setting of placements for the programme and how the education provider would ensure that there would be an appropriate range of placements to support students to achieve all the learning outcomes. The visitors

met colleagues from one placement provider and, although noting the close collaboration between that provider and the education provider, were unable to gauge the effectiveness of the collaboration with other placement providers, or whether there would be sufficient providers to offer an appropriate number and range of placements. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further information about its strategy for engaging with placement providers to ensure that an appropriate number and range of placements are available to students.

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 review the programme documentation to show how the assessment strategy and design ensures that a student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for clinical and forensic psychologists.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included a programme specification and a programme handbook, which included module descriptions, together with mapping documents showing how the SETs and SOPs were met. The programme is innovative as it is designed to cover the SOPs for both clinical and forensic psychologists. However, as indicated in the condition set against SET 3.8, discussions with the programme team indicated an intention to deliver the programme over four years of full time study instead of the two years of full study plus two years of part time study originally intended. The visitors noted that this change would inevitably lead to some restructuring of the programme and the way it was delivered and assessed, which would need to be reflected in the programme documentation. The visitors therefore require the education provider to review the programme documentation, in the light of the intention to deliver the programme over four years of full time study, to show how the assessment strategy and design ensures that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for clinical and forensic psychologists. The visitors consider the condition under SET 4.1 and 5.2 to link with this condition.

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 review the programme documentation to ensure that any exit award contains no reference to an HPC protected title or part of the Register.

Reason: The SETs mapping document submitted by the education provider included reference to a Masters in Clinical Psychology that could be awarded to a student who failed the research component of the programme but met all other course requirements. There was no reference to this award in the programme regulations, although there was reference to an aegrotat award and the programme handbook made reference to the award of a "lesser degree" in certain circumstances. In discussions, the programme team confirmed that such

exit awards were available in the existing Clinical Psychology Doctorate (ClinPsyD) and Doctorate in Forensic Psychology Practice (ForenPsyD) programmes, but that these awards did not include reference to a protected title. The visitors therefore require the education provider to review the programme documentation to ensure that any exit award contains no reference to an HPC protected title or part of the Register.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The visitors wished to encourage the education provider to keep the level of administrative support under review to ensure that there is sufficient support available for the effective delivery of the programme.

Reason: The visitors were content that this standard was met. They noted that there was to be a small increase in the level of administrative support available and that this would be reviewed as the number of students increased. The visitors welcomed the increase in administrative staff and, given the importance of administrative staff in supporting students on the programme, particularly in relation to placements, wished to encourage the education provider to monitor the level of administrative support actively to ensure that there continues to be sufficient administrative support to deliver the programme effectively.

George Delafield
Laura Golding