hpc health professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Bradford
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Applied Biomedical Science
Mode of delivery	Part Time
Relevant part of HPC register	Biomedical Scientist
Date of visit	21-22 May 2008

Contents

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 13 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 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 on 18 August 2008. At the Education and Training Committee's meeting on 18 August 2008, the approval of the programme was reconfirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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 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 part of a joint event. The education provider reviewed 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	Professor William Gilmore (Biomedical Scientist)
	David Houliston (Biomedical Scientist)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Paula Lescott
Proposed student numbers	10
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2008
Chair	Dr Chakib Kara-Zaitri (University of Bradford)
Secretary	Sally Holmes (University of Bradford)
Members of the joint panel	Jenny Beaumont (University of Bradford, Internal Panel Member)
	Fiona Sellers (Institute of Biomedical Science)
	Dr Neil Emmison (Institute of Biomedical Science)
	Alan Wainwright (Institute of Biomedical Science)
	Anne Costigan (University of Bradford, Internal Panel Member)
	Andrew Coutts (University of Bradford, Internal Panel Member)
	Dr Christine Horrocks (University of Bradford, Internal Panel Member)
	Dr William Mcllagga (University of Bradford, Internal Panel Member)

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	☐	☐	☒

The HPC did not review external examiners' reports prior to the visit as
These have not been produced as the programme is new.

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 (e.g. specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

The HPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science programme 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 50 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 13 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 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 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 admission procedures must give both 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 education provider must review the programme documentation and advertising materials, including the website, for the programme to follow the guidance provided in the HPC "Regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers".

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the programme team it was clear that the documentation did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by the HPC. In particular the term "state registered" is no longer used and should not be incorporated into HPC approved programme documentation. It should also be made clear that completion of the programme provides eligibility to apply for HPC registration. In addition, the term "biomedical science practitioner" should be removed, as this term is not the protected title for the profession, and the references to "biomedical sciences" as this was a programme title formally used by the education provider which is no longer in use. Therefore, in order to provide students with the correct information to make an informed choice about whether to join the programme and to prevent confusion amongst students on the programme, the visitors felt the programme documentation must be amended.

2.1   The admission procedures must give both 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 review the programme documentation to provide clarification of how candidates are admitted on to the programme.

Reason: From the documentation submitted by the programme team it was unclear how candidates were admitted on to the programme. The visitors would like to see evidence that information regarding the application process is communicated to candidates, to ensure that there is consistency in the information provided to candidates across both the full and part time routes, to demonstrate that this standard is being met.

3.3   There must be a named programme leader who has overall responsibility for the programme and who should be either on the relevant part of the HPC register or otherwise appropriately qualified and experienced.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly state who the programme leader is.

Reason: Following discussions with the programme team it was clear that there was a named programme leader who is appropriately qualified and experienced. However, in the documentation submitted by the programme team this

information was not clear. The visitors felt that this information should be clearly stated in the programme documentation.

3.5   Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the module descriptors in the programme documentation to clarify the module leaders allocated for all modules.

Reason: In the documentation supplied by the programme team information about module leaders was not provided in all of the module descriptors. Therefore the visitors were unable to determine if these members of the programme team have the relevant expertise and knowledge in this area in order to confirm that this standard has been 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 programme team, in conjunction with the placement providers, must review the mapping of the HPC standards of proficiency against the curriculum and learning outcomes of the programme modules.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the programme team the visitors found it difficult to see how the HPC standards of proficiency could clearly be met by students who complete the course. In discussion with the programme team it was evident that the mapping documentation did not reflect a lot of the work relating to the standards of proficiency that would be part of the programme. The documentation needs to be clearer to make more explicit within the mapping exercise where, across the whole programme, the standards of proficiency are being addressed so that the visitors can verify that this standard is being 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 programme team must review the module descriptors to clearly identify, within the learning outcomes, where students will meet the standards of proficiency for this profession.

Reason: From the standards of proficiency mapping document provided by the programme team it was not clear where several of the standards of proficiency would be met as they were missing from this mapping exercise. The visitors were also unable to determine from the learning outcomes whether all of the standards would be met. The visitors therefore felt the module descriptors must be updated to clearly identify where students will meet these standards.

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 programme team must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect how standard of proficiency 1b.3, "be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5", is addressed and assessed on the programme.

Reason: From the discussions with the programme team the visitors felt that the programme did not clearly link the learning outcomes to successful attainment of standard of proficiency 1b.3. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must clearly articulate where this standard of proficiency is met in the programme to ensure that those who complete the programme are safe and effective practitioners.

5.3.1 The practice placement settings must provide a safe environment.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that all placements are initially approved before the placement commences, and then regularly monitored by the education provider.

Reason: In the documentation regarding the proposed placement system submitted by the programme team the visitors felt that there was not enough evidence that the placements will need to be approved and monitored by the programme team. As the education provider must take responsibility for placement management on this programme they felt further evidence is required to ensure that this standard is being met.

5.3.2 The practice placement settings must provide safe and effective practice.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that all placements are initially approved before the placement commences, and then regularly monitored by the education provider.

Reason: In the documentation regarding the proposed placement system submitted by the programme team the visitors felt that there was not enough evidence that the placements will need to be approved and monitored by the programme team. As the education provider must take responsibility for placement management on this programme they felt further evidence is required to ensure that this standard is being met.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that all placements are initially approved before the placement commences, and then regularly monitored by the education provider.

Reason: In the documentation regarding the proposed placement system submitted by the programme team the visitors felt that there was not enough evidence that the placements will need to be approved and monitored by the programme team. As the education provider must take responsibility for

placement management on this programme they felt further evidence is required to ensure that this standard is being met.

5.7.1 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved.

Condition: The programme team, in conjunction with the placement providers, must review the mapping of the HPC standards of proficiency against the curriculum and learning outcomes of the programme modules.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the programme team the visitors found it difficult to see how the HPC standards of proficiency could clearly be met by students who complete the course. In discussion with the programme team it was evident that the mapping documentation did not reflect a lot of the work relating to the standards of proficiency that would be part of the programme. The documentation needs to be clearer to make more explicit within the mapping exercise where, across the whole programme, the standards of proficiency are being addressed so that the visitors can verify that this standard is being met.

5.8.1 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators must have relevant qualification and experience.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that all placements are initially approved before the placement commences, and then regularly monitored by the education provider.

Reason: In the documentation regarding the proposed placement system submitted by the programme team the visitors felt that there was not enough evidence that the placements will need to be approved and monitored by the programme team. As the education provider must take responsibility for placement management on this programme they felt further evidence is required to ensure that this standard is being met.

5.8.2 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators must be appropriately registered.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to demonstrate that all placements are initially approved before the placement commences, and then regularly monitored by the education provider.

Reason: In the documentation regarding the proposed placement system submitted by the programme team the visitors felt that there was not enough evidence that the placements will need to be approved and monitored by the programme team. As the education provider must take responsibility for placement management on this programme they felt further evidence is required to ensure that this standard is being met.

5.8.3 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The programme team must review the programme documentation to clarify how practice placement educators are trained and updated with refresher training.

Reason: Following a request from the visitors the programme team provided a list of current placement staff utilised by the education provider which indicated that 18 out of 39 of the staff did not have educator training. The visitors therefore wished to receive information of the training that the remaining staff will have undertaken. The visitors also wished to receive evidence of how parity across the placement experience is achieved by the programme team demonstrating how they update the placement staff on programme amendments and developments.

6.2   Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practice safely and effectively.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the learning outcomes for the programme modules to clearly reflect how standard of proficiency 1b.3, "be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5", is assessed on the programme.

Reason: From the discussions with the programme team the visitors felt that the programme did not clearly link the learning outcomes to successful attainment of standard of proficiency 1b.3. The visitors felt that the programme documentation must clearly articulate where this standard of proficiency is met in the programme to ensure that those who complete the programme will have demonstrated fitness to practise through the assessment methods.

6.7.5   Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that external examiners appointed to the programme must be registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the programme team did not contain the policy regarding external examiner recruitment. The visitors felt that this needs to be included within the documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

3.2   The programme must be managed effectively.

Recommendation: The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team holds meetings with the placement providers and on-site tutors as scheduled.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team it became apparent that scheduled meetings between the programme team and the placement staff previously have not taken place due to illness. The visitors wished to recommend that arrangements are made to ensure that these meetings take place as scheduled for the programme to receive maximum benefit.

3.6   A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Recommendation: The visitors wished to recommend that the programme team are given wider access to subject specific training and development to ensure that their clinical knowledge is up to date.

Reason: In discussion with the senior team it was apparent that funding for subject specific training was allocated on a competitive basis. Due to the importance of staff keeping their clinical knowledge current and the benefit this has in the development of the programme, the visitors wished to support the widening of access and financial support to the programme team.

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

Recommendation: The visitors wished to encourage that students rotate through a range of specialties where possible on placements.

Reason: In discussion with the students who had undertaken an optional placement it was clear that currently some students had the opportunity to experience a range of specialities on their placements but others did not. The visitors understand that this may be due to the facilities available at placements but wished to support that students receive a wide range of specialty experience on their placements in this programme to ensure that there is parity of placement experience on the programme.

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

Recommendation: The visitors wished to support the placement providers in their request to have an opportunity to provide formal feedback and hold discussions with the programme team at their scheduled meetings.

Reason: In discussion with the placement providers it was mentioned that there did not appear to be a formal forum or opportunity for placement providers to feedback to the programme team. The visitors wished to recommend that this is included in the meetings between the programme team and placement providers in order to assist the development and improvement of the programme.

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

Recommendation: The visitors wished to support the placement providers in their request to have an opportunity to provide formal feedback and hold discussions with the programme team at their scheduled meetings.

Reason: In discussion with the placement providers it was mentioned that there did not appear to be a formal forum or opportunity for placement providers to feedback to the programme team. The visitors wished to recommend that this is included in the meetings between the programme team and placement providers in order to assist the development and improvement of the programme.

Professor William Gilmore
David Houliston