

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Glasgow Caledonian University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy with Psychology BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy with Sociology BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy with Health Ergonomics
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC register	Occupational Therapy
Date of visit	29 and 30 October 2008

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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 13 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'occupational therapist' 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 February 2009. At the Committee meeting on 10 February 2009, 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

The HPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider issues raised by the previous year's annual monitoring process. The issues raised by annual monitoring affected the following standards - programme admissions standards, programme management and resources standards, curriculum standards, practice placements standards and assessment standards. The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that 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 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. The visit also considered a different programme – MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-registration). A separate visitor report exists for this programme.

Visit details

Name of HPC visitors and profession	Dr Nicola Spalding (Occupational Therapist) Ms Vivien Kilgour (Occupational Therapist)
HPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Abigail Creighton
Proposed student numbers	70 (across all degrees)
Initial approval (single honours degree)	January 1996
Initial approval (joint honours degrees)	September 2000
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2008
Chair	Ms Karen Thomson (Glasgow Caledonian University)
Secretary	Ms Moira MacAskill (Glasgow Caledonian University)

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	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

The HPC did not review a mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider meets the SOPs prior to the visit as a mapping document was not submitted as part of the previous year's annual monitoring process.

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	<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 (e.g. specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 62 of the SETs have been met and that a condition should be set on the remaining SET.

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 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 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.

The visitors have also made a number of commendations. Commendations are observations of innovative best practice by a programme or education provider.

Conditions

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the guidance for grading placements to ensure that students who achieve the threshold 40% pass mark will be fit to practice upon completion of the programme.

Reason: The halfway and final assessment reports used in all three placement modules are based on graded criteria (A+ – F), and are completed by placement educators. The external examiners reports from 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 highlighted the varying interpretations made by placement educators of these grades and the resultant inconsistency in marking. The programme team explained that they had updated the assessment reports and included one line descriptors for each numerical grade. In the meeting with the placement educators, they described how the grading was covered in their two day training sessions and how any difficulties were talked through with other placement educators or members of the programme team as they arose. Although the students and external examiners were concerned with the varying interpretations at the higher end of the grading range (i.e. the difference between an A+, A or a B) the visitors were concerned that there could also be varying interpretations at the lower end of the grading range. In particular, they had concerns with the statement for the D grade (45%) which read 'A student who meets the learning outcomes for the placement level but has required support and guidance to do so'. Without further guidance the visitors felt that there was no indication of what levels of support and guidance were appropriate and acceptable. In the meeting with the placement educators, they described examples of what kind of support was acceptable and said that a student would always require some level of supervision. The visitors accepted that there was always a degree of subjectivity in the assessment process, but agreed that further guidance was needed to act as a safeguard, so that threshold/borderline pass marks were only awarded to those students who demonstrated that they were capable of working autonomously at the end of their programme.

Recommendations

3.9 Where students participate as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider formulating how they inform applicants that they will be required to participate in practical and clinical teaching whilst on the programme.

Reason: The education provider has sound systems in place for obtaining consent from students and the students were familiar with the protocols. The programme team explained that they introduced the protocols formally once the students had enrolled on the programme, although they were verbally discussed during the interview and selection procedure. The visitors suggested that the requirements of participation in practical and clinical teaching and the consent protocols were included in the formal programme admissions information so that applicants were aware of the levels of participation that were expected from the onset.

Commendations

The visitors wish to commend the following aspects of the programme,

Commendation: The visitors would like to commend the learning resources and welfare facilities available through the Saltire Centre.

Reason: The Saltire Centre offers a wide range of learning resources and welfare services in a flexible and supportive space, which is accessible to all staff and students. The visitors were particularly impressed with both the size and design of the space. The building is modern, very well equipped and well designed to facilitate student learning in a broad range of scenarios (e.g. traditional library seating, group rooms, movable arches and pods, electronic learning). The visitors also wished to praise the range of face-to-face and electronic services available to students which provide academic and welfare advice. Even though the space and services are modern and commended by staff and students, the education provider continues to obtain and respond to feedback from students and staff to continually improve the space and services.

Commendation: The visitors would like to commend the role emerging placements model used in the programme.

Reason: This education provider was the first in the UK to introduce role emerging placements, and although the concept of them is more widespread today, the visitors wished to commend the continuing creative thinking behind their model and the significance given to them by the programme team. The role emerging placements allow students to work in an area not typically occupied by an Occupational Therapist. This helps considerably to develop students' clinical reasoning, their observation and social entrepreneurship skills as well as helping them to define what occupational therapy is and how it can be used. This in turn helps produce students who are extremely capable of working autonomously after graduation. Even though the role emerging placement model is resource intensive (e.g. students have two placement educators – an onsite supervisor and an off site occupational therapist supervisor) and requires complex and robust quality assurance mechanisms, the education provider continues to prioritise them due to their educational value.

Dr Nicola Spalding
Ms Vivien Kilgour