Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Bangor University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of HPC Register	Radiographer
Relevant modality / domain	Diagnostic radiography
Date of visit	8 – 9 September 2010

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 15 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'Radiographer'or 'Diagnostic radiographer' 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. The education provider has until 25 October 2010 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 21 October 2010. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 12 November 2010. The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Committee on the ongoing approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Committee on 16 February 2011.

Introduction

The HPC intended to visit 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, programme management and resources and assessment.

Information was later provided to the education executive from the education provider that indicated the circumstances behind the Committee's decision that a visit was required was still under consideration by the education provider. Given the programmes situation regarding possible future arrangements it was decided the visit should continue with a changed scope to assess the programme against all areas of the standards of education and training (SETs) not just those raised by the annual monitoring process.

The programme was already approved by the HPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the 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 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	Stephen Boynes (Diagnostic Radiographer) Linda Mutema (Diagnostic Radiographer)
HPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	30 per cohort
Initial approval	1 September 1999
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	20 September 2010
Chair	Tony Elliot (Bangor University)
Secretary	Denise Thompson (Bangor 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	☒	☐	☐
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	☒	☐	☐

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)	☒	☐	☐

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 number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 51 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 6 SETs.

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 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 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 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 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 all the programme documentation submitted to us prior to the visit to ensure that the terminology in use is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation and contains accurate information about the programme.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the advertising guidance issued by HPC. In particular, there were instances of out-of-date terminology in reference to English level requirements for "state registration as a Radiographer in the UK" (visit documentation for B.Sc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging 2010-13, Section 6.1). The term 'state registered' is no longer used by the professions we regulate and should not be incorporated into any materials relating to an HPC approved programme.

There was one instance (Undergraduate Handbook 2010-2011 Academic year, p15) where it was unclear as to the country HPC Registration will be recognised in, "it leads to an academic qualification and a professional award which allows eligibility to register for practise in the UK and worldwide". The HPC is based in the UK and as such a person with an HPC protected title will only be recognised within the UK not worldwide.

There was an instance (visit documentation for B.Sc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging 2010-13, Section 1.4) where it was stated that the "award will be recognised by the Health Professions Council (HPC)". The programme currently is approved and the ongoing approval has not been removed from the programme.

The visitors also noted the documentation was unclear when referring to the percentage of the programme which was clinical and that which was academic, "over 57% (clinical)…" (visit documentation for B.Sc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging 2010-13, Section 1.6 and 2.1) and "over 50% (clinical).." (visit documentation for B.Sc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging 2010-13, Appendix 5.) Discussions at the visit clarified the percentage of the programme to be just over 57%.

The visitors considered the documentation could be misleading to applicants and students and therefore require the documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect information or out-of-date terminology.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must submit further information that shows how they inform potential applicants of the health requirements prior to applying to the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit clearly stated that potential students would have to complete an occupational health medical questionnaire at the time of confirming a place on the programme. From the documentation provided the visitors noted that the first time a potential applicant was made aware of this requirement was at the time of confirming their acceptance of a place on the programme. The visitors articulated that potential applicants should be made aware of the requirement to complete an occupational health medical questionnaire before applying to the programme as it may affect their decision whether to apply for a place on the programme or not. Discussions at the visit indicated there was additional information, which had not been seen by the visitors, that was provided for potential applicants that would include information about the occupational health medical questionnaire. The visitors therefore require this further evidence to demonstrate that the programme information clearly articulates the necessity for applicants to undertake the occupational health medical questionnaire prior to them being offered a place on the programme.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence regarding systems in place for programme monitoring and evaluation.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included brief descriptions of the committees which oversee the programme. The Course/Board Committee was referenced in the documentation as being the main committee which had overall responsibility for the programme. This Course/Board Committee membership included student representatives and practice placement representatives alongside programme team representatives and management personnel. Discussions at the visit indicated that these meetings had been arranged but due to a lack of attendance and the limited availability of members they were subsequently cancelled. This resulted in the meetings not being held as frequently as the education provider intended. The education provider was aware of the need for regular meetings and at the visit discussed a plan to schedule regular meetings in for specific dates through the year. The visitors were satisfied with what the education provider said about the plans in place however they require further evidence that details the plan for scheduled upcoming meetings. The visitors also require further information regarding the nature of the Course/Board Committee meetings (such as Terms of Reference for the group, minutes of past meetings) in order to meet this standard.

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must revise programme documentation to include references to the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics alongside references to the professional body's Code of conduct and ethics.

Reason: The programme documentation provided prior to the visit made no explicit reference to the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The professional body's Code of conduct and ethics were referenced in the descriptions of the modules. Discussions with the students indicated they had been made aware of the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics but were not fully aware of the potential implications of these standards on their eligibility to register with the HPC or the implications for their future careers. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that the programme documentation includes specific references to HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics especially where the professional body's standards are mentioned to demonstrate that students fully understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence regarding regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placements.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included brief descriptions of the committees which oversee the programme. The Course/Board Committee was referenced in the documentation as being the main committee which had overall responsibility for the programme. This Course/Board Committee membership included student representatives and practice placement representatives alongside programme team representatives and management personnel. During discussion it was indicated that these meetings were one of the main ways for the individual practice placement educators to have an input into the curriculum development and the running of the programme. Therefore these meetings can be considered key in providing an official forum for effective collaboration and relationships between the education provider and the practice placement providers.

Discussions at the visit also indicated that these meetings had been scheduled but due to a lack of attendance and the limited availability of members they were subsequently cancelled. This resulted in the meetings not being held as frequently as the education provider intended. The education provider was aware of the need for regular meetings and at the visit discussed a plan to schedule regular meetings for specific dates through the year. The visitors were satisfied with what the education provider said about the plans in place however they require further evidence that details the plan for scheduled upcoming meetings. The visitors also require further information regarding the nature of the Course/Board Committee meetings (such as Terms of Reference for the group, minutes of past meetings) in order to meet this standard.

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 revise the programme documentation to clearly articulate that external examiners appointed to the programme must be HPC registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed with the HPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail in the external examiner recruitment policy. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner for the programme but require evidence that HPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate the recognition of this requirement.

Recommendations

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the Course/Board Committee meetings to encourage attendance.

Reason: From documentation provided and discussions at the visit the visitors were satisfied the programme had Course/Board Committee meetings in place that oversaw the monitoring and evaluation systems of the programme. Discussions with the students, practice placement providers and the programme team indicated confirming attendees for these meetings proved problematic. The visitors recommend that the programme team should consider how they articulate the meetings purpose to potential attendees and review how they promote the meetings to encourage attendance. The visitors feel the meetings are a crucial element in allowing students and practice placements the opportunity to enhance and develop the programme they are involved in and feel it would be beneficial for all to be able to use the meetings to their full capacity.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider implementing a more formal process for obtaining consent from students when they participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: Documentation provided at the visit included specific information about the consent protocols in place. Discussions with the students indicated they were all fully aware of the reasons and implications of their own consent and comfortable with the consent arrangements in place including arrangements if they decided to 'opt out' of particular academic aspects of the programme. Discussion with the programme team indicated they had never found a problem with the way in which they informed students about consent protocol and detailed to the visiting panel instances where opting out of sessions had been effectively dealt with by both the student involved and the programme team staff. The visitors were satisfied with these arrangements for obtaining student consent however recommend the education provider consider formalising the consent arrangements to make them more auditable (such as a consent form detailing protocol and 'opt-out' procedures for the student to sign prior to commencing the programme). The visitors feel it would be useful for the education provider to hold records of the consent forms in case they are later needed.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider the following SOPs when reviewing the module descriptors.

1.b.2   be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

2b.4   be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully
- be able to assist with standard magnetic resonance imaging
- be able to assist with ultrasound imaging procedures

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included a SOPs mapping document and descriptions of the modules. The visitors were satisfied that the modules learning outcomes articulated in the module descriptors ensure that those who successfully complete the programme can meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the register. However, in order to further imbed the SOPs into the learning the visitors recommend the education provider amend the module descriptors to make more explicit the special imaging modalities as detailed in SOP 2b.4. The visitors also recommend that the education provider reflects on how the programme can further prepare students for multi-disciplinary team working later in their working careers. The visitors feel this would strengthen the programme and lead to graduates with enhanced skills upon exiting the programme.

Steve Boynes
Linda Mutema