Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Oxford Brookes University
Programme name	BSc Paramedic Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time Flexible
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Paramedic
Date of visit	25 – 26 November 2014

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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. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'paramedic' 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 14 May 2015. At the Committee meeting, the programme was approved. 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 HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC 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 (College of Paramedics) considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice. The education provider, 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. A separate report exists for the other programme. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Robert Fellows (Paramedic) Clare Bates (Lay visitor) Paul Bates (Paramedic)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
Proposed student numbers	70 per cohort per year (inclusive of BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice)
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2016
Chair	Howard Brown (Oxford Brookes University)
Secretary	Krisztina Jaksa (Oxford Brookes University)
Members of the joint panel	Rachel Long (Internal Panel Member) Julia Winter (Internal Panel Member) Sharon Hardwick (External Panel Member) Vincent Clarke (College of Paramedics) Paul Townsend (College of Paramedics)

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	☒	☐	☐
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 HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit, the programme is a new programme and therefore no reports exist. However, the visitors did review the external examiner's reports for the FdSc Paramedic Emergency Care.

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators / mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☐	☐	☒
Service users and carers	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with students from the FdSc Paramedic Emergency Care 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 satisfied 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 the relevant 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 ten SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. 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 can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level

Conditions

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must submit further information about the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) policy for the programme and evidence to demonstrate students will achieve all the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: The documentation provided for this visit included information about the education provider wide accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) processes. The education provider's website indicates that applicants can apply to use the AP(E)L process, "Where applicants' prior un-certificated learning, including experience and industrial training, can be assessed with sufficient accuracy it may be used to give entry to an Oxford Brookes programme with specific credit" (A2-5 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)). It was highlighted through discussion that students from the Dip HE Paramedic Emergency Care will transfer onto this programme through the AP(E)L route once they have completed year one or year two of the Dip HE Paramedic Emergency Care. As these are two different programmes, the visitors were unclear how students will achieve the SOPs for paramedics when they enrol through the AP(E)L route from Dip HE Paramedic Emergency Care to this programme. The visitors therefore require further information about the AP(E)L policy for the programme and evidence to demonstrate students who enrol to this programme from Dip HE Paramedic Emergency Care will achieve all the SOPs for paramedics.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show that the partnership arrangements between the EP and the partner organisations have been finalised and agreed.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation provided, that the proposed partnership arrangements between the education provider and the partner organisations articulate the responsibilities each partner has in the effective delivery of the programme. The visitors were unsure of the current status of the agreements and were unable to identify how these proposed partnership arrangements reflect the new arrangements to ensure that this new programme provision has a secure position in the education provider's business plan. In the senior team meeting it was discussed that there are updated partnership agreements between the education provider and its partner organisations. However, the visitors were unable to see those agreements at the visit. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to show the draft of these partnership agreements finalised and signed, to determine how the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of what commitment is being made to ensure the programme has a secure place in the education providers' business plan.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation submitted prior to the visit and noted that the programme has appropriate resources in place for the proposed intake of 50 students once a year. However, during the meetings and discussions with the senior and programme team, the visitors learnt that the student numbers will increase to 70 students along with the programme running the first and the second year of the programme in September 2016. The visitors also learnt that this programme and the Dip HE Paramedic Emergency Care programme will run in parallel in 2016 – 17 and 2017 – 18 academic years. The visitors could not determine how the current resources including academic staff, practice educators and practice placements detailed in the documentation are appropriate for the above changes to student intake. This condition is also linked to the other condition placed on SET 3.1 regarding placement arrangements. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to show the commitment made and how the education provider is planning to put appropriate resources in place to ensure the programme is secure.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit programme documentation that has been revised to meet the conditions set as a result of this validation event.

Reason: Through discussion at the visit, and from the final conclusions of the internal validation and professional body visiting panel it was clear revisions will be made to programme documentation to meet conditions set by the joint panel. The visitors consider programme documentation that students routinely refer to as important resources to support student learning. In particular, the conditions set referred to amendments to module descriptors, the programme specification document and the student handbook. To ensure the programme meets this standard the visitors need to review the revised documents to ensure the resources to support student learning are effectively used. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to submit the revised programme documentation the students routinely refer to.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must identify where on the programme students' attendance is mandatory and how the attendance mechanisms are effectively communicated and monitored.

Reason: The programme documentation submitted prior to the visit did mention attendance requirements for this programme. The visitors learnt during the programme team meeting that each module guide has mandatory attendance requirements and monitoring mechanisms. The visitors were only given module descriptors and therefore could not review module guides. The visitors highlighted that these individual module

requirements are not clearly articulated in the programme documents provided. Therefore the programme team will need to clearly identify where students' attendance is mandatory and the procedures and mechanisms in place to communicate and monitor it effectively.

3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence regarding the plans for continued service user and carer involvement within the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors could not determine whether service users and carers are involved in the programme because in the SETs mapping document SET 3.17 was left blank. Discussion at the visit indicated there was service users and carers' involvement in this programme in a number of ways. However, from the discussions with the programme team it was clear that formal future plans have yet to be finalised to involve service users in the programme. It was indicated by the service users and carers that there are plans for their further involvement in the programme, but the programme team provided limited detail about how this will work. The visitors were unable to determine from the discussion and the documentation provided that a plan is in place for how service users and carers will continue to be involved in the programme. In order to determine that this standard is met the visitors require further evidence demonstrating the plans for future service user and carer involvement.

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 demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for paramedics.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, each with several of the SOPs listed as being covered in each module. There was also a mapping document which showed the SOPs mapped against module titles and learning outcomes. During discussion at the visit, and from the final conclusions of the internal validation and professional body visiting panel it was clear revisions will be made to some of the learning outcomes for modules to meet conditions set by the joint panel as part of the post panel process for the internal validation. Therefore the visitors will require further evidence of how the programme's revised learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet the SOPs for paramedics, to ensure that this standard is met. The visitors require a detailed breakdown of how each SOP is delivered in relation to the learning outcomes, including SOPs covered in the revised modules.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The programme team must provide further information on the learning outcomes for non-ambulance service placements, including methods of assessment, and any alignment to academic modules.

Reason: The visitors noted that there will be placements in front-line ambulance service settings, as highlighted in Practice Learning Handbook, page 16 "Full Time 2015 students undertaking the first year of the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science Degree are expected to achieve a total of 750 practice hours. Practice hours will comprise 750 hours placement experience on front-line ambulances". However, during the meeting with the programme team, the visitors learnt that students will attend non ambulance placements in the NHS as part of their programme. The visitors noted the importance of ensuring students have sufficient exposure to a variety of situations such as within hospital settings and other non NHS placements. However, the visitors could not find further detail in the documentation to support these placement experiences, regarding how these placements will be integrated with the programme, or information of the learning outcomes and associated assessments. They therefore require further evidence that the students and placement educators in non-ambulance placement settings are given sufficient information to understand the learning outcomes to be achieved, and are therefore fully prepared for placement in non-ambulance settings.

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- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The programme team must provide further information as to how the education provider ensures placement educators and students in the placement settings are fully prepared for placements.

Reason: At the visit, the programme team and practice placement providers indicated that a "check list" of objectives that need to be achieved at non ambulance placement will be provided (Practice Learning Handbook page 22). During discussions, the programme team highlighted that they will work on strengthening the existing document to include students' scope of practice. The programme team talked through how they envisage this document will be used alongside the Practice Assessment Document

(PAD) in assessing and preparing students and preparing practice placement educators in the practice placement setting. However, the visitors were unable to determine how this document will ensure all practice educators are aware of the students' progress and their scope of practice. The visitors were therefore unclear as to how the placement educators and students will be prepared adequately for practice placement. This standard is also linked to the other condition placed on SET 5.11 above. Therefore, the visitors require further documents including the any documents about students' scope of practice to support the way the placement educators and students will be prepared.

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 demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency for paramedics.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the mapping documentation provided prior to the visit detailing the learning outcomes in programme modules and the assessment methods to assess these learning outcomes. However, in line with the visitors' concerns relating to SET 4.1, and from the final conclusions of the internal validation and professional body visiting panel, it was clear revisions will be made to the assessment methods for some of the modules to meet conditions set by the joint panel. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme's assessment strategy and design ensures that all students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency to ensure 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 education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. Discussion indicated aegrotat awards would only be awarded in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. The visitors could not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not enable them to be eligible to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding the aegrotat award.

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, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The visitors saw the curriculum vitae for the current external examiners and were satisfied with the current arrangement. However, in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy. It was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the Register. In discussion with the programme team it was indicated the programme team would take account of this standard when updating programme documents. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors need to see evidence of the HCPC requirements regarding external examiners within the programme documentation.

Recommendations

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the education provider ensure staffing levels for the programme are reviewed appropriately to reflect the projected student numbers.

Reason: From the evidence provided in the programme documentation and the programme team meeting at the visit, the visitors were content that this standard was met. However, during the programme team meeting the visitors learnt that the programme will increase student numbers up to 220 in 2019 – 20 academic year as the programme becomes established. The visitors would like to recommend that if this happens the education provider considers reviewing the staff numbers on an annual basis to ensure there continues to be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme. If the number of students on the programme increases significantly the visitors remind the programme team that they must inform the HCPC through the major change process.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the education provider considers engaging with current and other placement providers to ensure the number and range of placement settings and practice educators is appropriate for the projected student numbers.

Reason: From the evidence provided in the programme documentation and the programme team meeting at the visit, the visitors were content that this standard was met. However, during the programme team meeting the visitors learnt that the programme will have an increase student numbers of up to 220 in 2019 – 20 academic year as the programme becomes established. The visitors would like to recommend that if this happens the education provider considers working closely with current and other placement providers to ensure the number and range of placement settings and practice educators is appropriate for the projected student numbers. If the number of students on the programme increases significantly the visitors remind the programme team that they must inform the HCPC through the major change process.

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