

## Major change visitors' report

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### Section one: Programme details

Name of education provider	The Robert Gordon University
Programme title	Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Physiotherapist
Date of submission to the HCPC	20 July 2015
Name and role of HCPC visitors	Anthony Power (Physiotherapist) Kathryn Heathcote (Physiotherapist)
HCPC executive	Ben Potter

### Section two: Submission details

#### Summary of change

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

SET 2: Programme admissions

The creation of the new award of Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration) has led to a change in the entry criteria for the programme.

SET 3: Programme management and resources

There is a new programme leader for the programme and there is a potential increase in required capacity for the programme team to supervise between 6 and 10 students through a doctoral thesis project.

SET 4: Curriculum

SET 6: Assessment

The existing Module HSM155 Physiotherapy Project will be replaced by module HSM157 Doctorate Proposal and Thesis. This new module will require new

assessments and the doctoral thesis element of this will be assessed under the university research degrees process.

The following documents were provided as part of the submission:

- Major change notification form (completed by the HCPC executive)
- Context pack
- Major change SETs mapping document (completed by education provider)
- Programme specification
- MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) course specification
- Course schematic/academic calendar
- SOPs mapping document
- Academic regulations
- Module descriptors
- Overview and resource document for all physiotherapy programmes
- External curriculum guidance mapping documents

### **Section three: Additional documentation**

- ☐ The visitors agreed that no further documentation was required in order to make a recommendation.
- ☒ The visitors agreed that additional documentation was required in order to make a recommendation. The standards of education and training (SETs), for which additional documentation was requested, are listed below with reasons for the request.

#### **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.**

**Reason:** From the information provided the visitors were clear that information would be provided to potential applicants prior to them applying to gain a place on the programme. However, the visitors were also made aware that the marketing material that would form the basis of this information is not yet available. As such the visitors are unable to determine what information will be provided to applicants and potential students to ensure that they are aware of the requirements of the programme and how they would progress through to completing a doctorate. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of what information will be provided to potential students and applicants to ensure that they can make informed decisions about whether to apply and/or take up a place on the programme

**Suggested documentation:** Further evidence of the information to be provided to potential students and applicants and an indication of what information will be provided at which points throughout the programmes' application process.

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

**Reason:** The visitors noted that this programme, the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration), is a new programme that could recruit up to ten students per cohort. It is not clear from the documentation provided whether this number of students is in addition to those currently on the Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) and MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) programmes and subsequently what position this programme has in the wider business plan for the faculty, school or education provider. As such the visitors are unclear about how this programme will be resourced and what place this programme will have in the education providers' business plan. Therefore, the visitors require further information to determine whether this new programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence regarding the business plan and other resources planning to demonstrate that the programme is viable and sustainable and that adequate resources will be in place.

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

**Reason:** The visitors noted that this programme, the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration), is a new programme that could recruit up to ten students per cohort. It is not clear from the documentation provided whether this number of students is in addition to those currently on the Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) and MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) programmes and as such it is unclear what additional staff resource will be required. The visitors are therefore unclear about how the education provider will ensure that there are sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place and how staff will be supported to ensure they have the appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver this programme.

**Suggested documentation:** Evidence of the planning process to ensure that staffing requirements for this programme will be met. This could include information on the teaching loads for staff teaching on both this programme and the PGDip/MSc and how this will impact on the number of staff teaching on this programme. Further evidence could also be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the staff engaged in the delivery of this programme have the appropriate experience and qualifications to do so effectively.

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

**Reason:** The visitors noted that this programme, the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration), is a new programme that could recruit up to ten students. It is not clear from the documentation provided whether this number of students is in addition to those currently on the Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) and MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) programmes and as such it is unclear what additional resources will be put in place to support the additional numbers across all stages of the programme. The visitors therefore require further information of the resources in place to support students learning in all settings and how these resources will be effectively used.

**Suggested documentation:** Further evidence of the resource planning that has been undertaken to ensure that the programme is sustainable and that adequate resources will be in place to deliver the programme effectively.

**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.**

**Reason:** The visitors noted, in the evidence provided, that the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration) is a full-time course. However, in the programme documentation it is stated that students are expected to be able to secure work once they have reached the stage of applying for HCPC registration at the end of stage two. From their review of the documentation provided the visitors could not identify what the attendance requirements for students would be and how the programme team would monitor the attendance of students throughout stage three of the programme to ensure that they meet these requirements. As such the visitors require further evidence of the attendance expectations for students once they progress onto stage three of this programme, how students are made aware of these requirements, and how the programme team will go about monitoring students' attendance during this part of the programme.

**Suggested documentation:** Further evidence of the attendance requirements and monitoring mechanisms in place on the programme, with particular reference to stage three of the programme.

**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.**

**Reason:** The visitors noted that the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration) is a new programme that will require an assured supply of high quality practice placement opportunities. The documentation also states that stage three of the programme includes a research placement when students will be allocated a clinical site supervisor. However, from the information provided the visitors could not identify how the programme team would ensure that there is a sufficient number and range of practice placement opportunities that will be appropriate for the requirements of this programme. The visitors were also unclear as to how these placements would be allocated to the students who would be undertaking the doctoral research. The visitors therefore require further evidence to determine how this programme will ensure that the number, duration and range of placements will be appropriate to ensure that students will achieve the required learning outcomes.

**Suggested documentation:** Information about the number and range of practice placements available throughout all three stages of the programme, how these will be sourced and how they will be allocated to students.

**5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.**

**Reason:** The visitors noted that the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration) is a new programme that will require an assured supply of high quality practice placement opportunities. The documentation also states that stage three of the programme

includes a research placement when students will be allocated a clinical site supervisor. However, from the information provided the visitors could not identify how the programme team will ensure that clinical site supervisors will have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to supervise students undertaking a doctoral research project. The visitors therefore require further evidence to determine how the programme team will ensure that the relevant practice placement educators will have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience required to supervise students through a doctoral research project.

**Suggested documentation:** Further evidence of how practice placement educators will be selected and trained to ensure that they can supervise a doctoral candidate appropriately as well as further information about how and when supervisors will be allocated to students.

#### **6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.**

**Reason:** The visitors noted that this programme, the Doctorate of Physiotherapy (pre-registration), is a new programme that will be taught alongside the existing Post Graduate Diploma in Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) and MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) programmes. As such there may be the potential for students who do not reach the specified requirements for progression on the doctoral programme to transfer to the MSc or postgraduate diploma and for students who excel in these programmes to transfer to the doctoral programme. However the visitors could not identify, from the information provided, how students will be informed of the possibility of transfer between the programmes and how they may be able to progress should they fail to meet, or exceed, the specified requirements for progression. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the assessment regulations governing progression and achievement in the programme will be communicated to students.

**Suggested documentation:** Further evidence of how the assessment regulations governing progression and achievement will be provided to students to ensure that they understand how they can progress and achieve through this programme.

#### **Section four: Recommendation of the visitors**

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 have demonstrated an ability to meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- ☒ There is sufficient evidence to show the programme continues to meet the standards of education and training and that those who complete the programme will continue to demonstrate an ability to meet the standards of proficiency.
- ☐ There is insufficient evidence to determine if or how the programme continues to meet the standards of education and training listed. Therefore, a visit is recommended to gather more evidence and if required place conditions on ongoing approval of the programme.

Date of ETP final decision: 24 September 2015