

Education Visitors' Report

(Monitoring of a Programme)

Educational Institution	Teesside University
Programme Name	Msci (Hons) Chiropractic
Start Date of Programme	September 2020
Date of Visit	24 th May 2022 (Year Two Monitoring Visit)

Panel Chair	Grahame Pope
Panel Member	Daniel Heritage
Observers (If applicable)	Penny Bance
Panel Secretary	Elizabeth Austin

Introduction

In June 2020, the MSci (Hons) programme at Teesside University was granted approval with **three conditions**. The Approval Panel and Education Committee recognised that in being a new programme, delivered by an institution new to the GCC, a more rigorous monitoring process would be required to ensure all standards were being met. The Panel was satisfied that conducting annual monitoring visits would achieve this requirement.

A monitoring visit took place in June 2021 with a focus on progress towards meeting the conditions set in 2020. The panel comprised one lay chair and one chiropractic panel member who sat on the original approval panel.

The second monitoring visit took place on 24th May 2022 and comprised the same panel members to ensure the process remained efficient and consistent.

Staff members, groups, facilities and resources that the panel plans to see.			
	Yes	No	N/A
Dean/ pro-vice-chancellor/deputy vice chancellor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative(s) from validating institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Senior management responsible for programme resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme Leader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clinic facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Learning Resources (e.g. IT, library facilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: External chiropractic educators placement providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conditions imposed on Teesside University at the time of approval in 2020 and decision on whether they have been met. (if applicable)		
Condition	Deadline	Condition met?
The GCC will conduct annual monitoring visits until the first graduating cohort has been achieved to ensure it is satisfied that the programme is meeting all the requirements set out in the GCC's Education Standards.	First semester 2021	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The institution must recruit an appropriately qualified senior chiropractic member of staff who must take up post by the end of June 2020 or before.	CV to be supplied upon confirmation of appointment	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
The institution must formalise the agreements with placement providers, confirming there is sufficient capacity for students by September 2020.	September 2020	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendations		
The University to consider the minimum number of students for which they would be prepared to run the course.		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
The University to provide appropriate support to chiropractic educators to deliver the practice-based learning element to ensure that they are properly prepared to participate in hosting students, prior to the start of the first placement.		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially met Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Teesside University/School to support chiropractic students recruited to the first cohort to develop a chiropractic society to assist with the development of professional identity	Student rep per year group. Potential for a separate chiropractic society to be reviewed annually.	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Conditions imposed on Teesside University following the monitoring visit in 2021 and decision on whether they have been met. (if applicable)		
Condition	Deadline	Condition met?
The GCC will conduct annual monitoring visits until the first graduating cohort has been achieved to ensure it is satisfied that the programme is meeting all the requirements set out in the GCC's Education Standards.	First semester 2021	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For all clinical placement educators to have access and complete formal Clinical Educator Training.	Update provided to GCC by 30 September 2021 with completion of the condition by 1 February 2022	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendations 2021		
The University to support the students in the creation of a Student Chiropractic Society. With the hopeful return to campus in 2021 and a second cohort of students, this should be achievable and sustainable		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
The University to ensure that all students gain the depth and breadth of experience within a clinical environment, with a focus on soft skills development.		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

The University to formalise its information to students regarding additional personal costs associated with studying the MSci (Hons) Chiropractic course		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially Met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
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How conditions, recommendations and areas of concern were addressed

Panel meeting with Senior Management Team

The Panel met with senior members of staff to find out how the course had been progressing since the last visit in 2021.

Covid recovery

The Senior Management Team (SMT) reported that from the start of the academic year face to face teaching was fully restored which was a very welcomed development. They reported there were initially some small pockets of anxiety amongst students around returning to campus, but those concerns have now been allayed. Due to positive feedback, some assessments that were adapted and moved online are expected to remain this way going forward while others will revert to a more traditional model.

During the previous academic year, staff support had been considerable and there was a huge development in materials for online resources. The 'future facing learning framework' helped to maintain student engagement throughout the lockdown, with each student having their own I-Pad, pre-loaded with a toolkit of applications.

The SMT reported they were currently gathering information from all key stakeholders, following the lifting of restrictions, to produce the best possible experience for the students.

The Course Leader reported that there was a 'strong sense of community' amongst the chiropractic students which strengthened during Covid, as they were often the only cohort attending campus for their sessions.

Course viability

It was reported that 'application numbers were buoyant' for the next academic year. Open days have been very popular and it is pleasing to note that many applications are now from outside the locality. There are currently five international offers for year one entry and five for foundation year entry. The SMT realise the need to grow the course in a 'sensible and managed way', taking into account resources of space, staff and placement providers.

Clinic

Currently, discussions are taking place around the clinic space and where it will be located on campus. SMT shared that there is a desire to establish a multi-professional clinic hub at School level that would promote inter professional learning. The clinic would be outward facing with the community coming onto campus to receive treatment. It was recognised that having a scalable model is crucial and staff will need to be recruited yearly to manage the proposed growth. It was reported that a new academic lecturer will be recruited before September to support the existing team, along with some external hourly paid lecturers (HPLs) to provide supervisory roles in the clinic.

The clinic team have also been pro-active in visiting other providers to observe their existing clinic setups and models of delivery.

Research

SMT reported that research and scholarly activity time was built into staff contracts and currently around one third of staff are 'research active'. There is a desire to increase this over time to fifty percent. There is currently no expectation in terms of output as the course is at a very early stage and new staff from clinical backgrounds have not participated in research before. There is however an expectation that staff engage with the process and there is a desire to create an 'impactful research footprint'.

Student fees

The Panel noted that in the university prospectus student fees are reduced during the fourth year of study to £6100. The Panel asked the SMT for further clarification around this as historically, the clinic year is the most expensive year of the programme to run.

Panel Meeting with External Clinical Educators/Placement Providers

The Panel met with four clinical educators/placement providers to discuss student progress since the relaxation of Covid restrictions.

The Placement

The Panel were informed that all placement providers were enjoying their role as educators and had observed increasing confidence in the students over the placements. Occasionally, there had been some logistical challenges for the students due to travelling long distances by public transport, but the majority were punctual to placements. Positive feedback was reported from all placement providers who wished they had had this opportunity while they were at university.

Some providers had up to four students per day and commented that the students were 'engaged and asking many questions that showed their thinking is developing'. Some second years were taking patient history, making notes, and speaking to the patients. In other placements the second years were observing more complex cases and then questioned following the appointment. Patients found having the students present at their treatment an interesting and positive learning experience. The clinics always informed patients in advance of the treatment that students would be present.

Pleasingly, the providers reported they had not observed any gaps in the students' knowledge due to the impact of Covid and were extremely impressed with their level of knowledge.

Training

The providers confirmed that they had completed clinical educator training at the end of year one and were also given extra documentation to refer to. The course team have also given them excellent on-going support when required.

When the Panel asked the providers if they felt it could be useful to meet other educators from other healthcare courses, there was a consensus that this would be beneficial and worthwhile.

Next Steps

Thinking about the progression of students moving into year three, the providers stated they had received an outline, but would need more detailed information regarding what would be expected of them. They did confirm that a meeting had been planned to discuss this and to give feedback to the university to help develop practice. They were all confident that they would be fully informed well before the September start.

Meeting with students

The panel met with three students, two second years and one first year, who were asked about their experiences regarding admissions and the programme.

Admissions

All three students gave positive feedback around the admissions process and stated the open days were 'excellent', all queries were thoroughly answered and the process was clear. There was only one slight issue regarding international tuition fees that affected one student.

The Programme

Students reported to the Panel that during the last academic year there was a hybrid teaching model in operation but since September, teaching is now face to face on campus. This has been received positively and the students feel 'motivated' in their studies.

The students were happy with their allocated practical space/classroom and commented that it was very accessible for them to use even outside of their usual timetabled sessions. This was beneficial to the students in the run up to their exams.

The Panel sought feedback on the students' experience of the personal tutoring system. Students fed back that they are allocated a personal tutor who teaches on the programme but there is an 'open door policy', where they can speak to any member of staff they feel comfortable talking with and not just their assigned personal tutor.

Regarding mental health and wellbeing services, the students reported that there is a waiting list for the counselling service and sometimes the student helpline is not 'always responsive.' Personal tutors speak about mental health and other support issues regularly with the students and following a mental health workshop a support group has been established with the ethos of 'students supporting students'.

Students confirmed to the panel that communication between students and the course team is 'effective and well organised.' Any timetable changes are communicated clearly in advance and necessary information is provided. Students also felt that the course team acted upon their feedback and positive changes have been implemented following feedback sessions. They felt there was a 'complete feedback cycle.'

When asked about their experiences of inter disciplinary learning (IDL), students commented that they had not really mixed with students on other healthcare courses. They had however received talks on inter professional relationships in the wider healthcare community.

The panel enquired about their placement experiences and there was consensus that the model was working well and was something the students enjoyed and found beneficial. The NHS placement at Harrogate Hospital had allowed for some Inter professional learning and had been 'an eye opener' for the students. All fed back

positively about their private placements and reported there had been 'excellent opportunities' to develop. The second years enjoyed speaking to the patients and taking patient history and found it 'challenging and exciting'. One issue reported to the Panel concerned the additional finances students were expected to pay to travel to their private placements and they commented that they had not been informed of the cost implications when they started the course.

The students also confirmed to the Panel that a chiropractic society had been established and was developing steadily.

During their final comments the students said that overall, the course 'was pretty amazing it was up to the standard it is for the short amount of time it has been established.'

Meeting with the Course Team

The Panel met with the course team to find out how the course had been progressing since the last visit in 2021.

Covid Impact

The course team confirmed that following Covid, some positives had been identified with the new teaching and learning structure and some aspects will be retained going forward. These include increased use of the VLE, online assessments where appropriate and strategies such as 'flipped learning' in seminars. The team also reported they were trying to reduce the assessment burden on the students but this is not without its challenges. The Panel were informed that the assessment strategy is constantly discussed and reviewed as it is such a new programme. The team were also looking at ways to assess the students 'soft skills', while out on placement.

The course team expressed their aspirations to develop inter professional learning on the programme and would be looking to do this in the near future.

Staffing

The panel enquired how new staff were supported at the university and their experience of the induction process. The Panel was informed that the university had an 'open door policy' to help and support staff and had a mentorship scheme in place. Professional development is promoted and new staff were undertaking their PGCert in Higher Education which leads to a fellowship of the Advanced HE. Over the summer, training workshops were planned to help staff prepare for supporting students with the dissertation module.

Placements

The course team confirmed there was a range of NHS and chiropractic specific placements for students in years one and two to access. The course team commented that the placements were a great way to develop the students' 'soft skills', such as communication, time management and organisation. The Panel was informed that twice yearly debrief sessions with all placement providers and written feedback from students have been used to improve the process and provide a comprehensive overview of the placement model.

From September 2022, the year three students will continue to attend private placements during semester one and two, but semester three will be undertaken at the new university clinic.

The panel was informed that students attending NHS placements had their travelling and accommodation expenses covered but had to finance their travel to private placements.

Support

The course team confirmed that all students were allocated a personal tutor and there was additional centralised support for students around wellbeing and mental health. Counselling services were available but there had been some delays with accessing this service.

Meeting with the Clinic Team

The clinic team confirmed to the Panel that a plan is in place for the future clinic. The capital expenditure bids were in for the resources required and the team reported there would be five treatment rooms as a minimum, but they were hopeful for ten. There would also be a private room to take case histories and initial consultations. The team confirmed that there were currently two spaces that could be converted into the clinic and by May 2023 it will be 'up and running'. It is envisaged that third year students will be attending clinic for three half days/week on a rota basis during semester three and careful planning has ensured that clinic days are reserved, and students will not miss any academic teaching. The clinic will be open everyday to patients to provide continuity of care.

Policies will need to be put in place and the Panel advised that relevant Care Quality Commission documentation could be very helpful as these were considered 'gold standard' in the sector. The Royal College of Chiropractors' 'Clinical Management Quality Mark' will also be used as a framework.

Final meeting with Senior Management Team

During the final meeting with the SMT, the Chair of the Panel gave a summary of the Panel's conclusions which are outlined below.

The Chair stated that in the Panel's view there had been continued development and progress of the programme over the past year and so would be recommending continued approval of the programme with **three additional conditions, two recommendations and two commendations**.

Recommendation to GCC Education Committee	
Conditions met fully (recommend approval without conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conditions not yet met fully	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

New conditions imposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No action to be taken (continue to monitor)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdraw approval (serious deficiencies that are a major cause for concern)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conclusion

In terms of conditions and recommendations the Panel noted and agreed that one condition from 2020 cannot be met until the first cohort of students have graduated.

The Panel recommended the continued approval of the programme, with three further conditions imposed at the 2022 monitoring visit, two recommendations and two commendations.

Conditions

1. That information aimed at students and prospective students regarding additional costs of studying on the MSci programme, including travel costs is explicit and visible on the MSci "landing page" of the University website, and that information is included in open day meetings/presentations.
2. That the University provide an update on the progress, including a timeline for the development and implementation of the Chiropractic Clinic within the university by September 30th 2022.
3. That the University provide a plan for IPL opportunities, and its implementation timeline, for all students across the four years of the course by September 30th 2022.

Recommendations

1. That the university investigate opportunities for clinical educators associated with the MSci programme to engage in inter-professional activity such as clinical educator training/updates.
2. That the university review the final years fees structure for the programme, and if there are any changes from the advertised rates (in the prospectus) ensure all students (current and potential applicants) are made aware.

Commendations

1. Commend the feedback cycle and associated communications between staff and students in regard to issues raised by students.
2. Commend the level of personal support and accessibility of staff.

Signed:



Panel Chair: Grahame Pope

Date: 01/06/22