

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	26 th May 2023 (Year Three 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.

Monitoring visits took place in June 2021 and May 2022 with a focus on progress towards meeting the conditions set in 2020 and 2021. The panel comprised one lay chair and one chiropractic panel member who sat on the original approval panel.

The third monitoring visit took place on 26th May 2023 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Resources (e.g. IT, library facilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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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Conditions imposed on Teesside University following the monitoring visit in 2022 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.	Summer 2024	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	September 30 th 2022	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
That the University provide an update on the progress, including a timeline for the development and implementation of the Chiropractic Clinic within the university.	September 30 th 2022	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
That the University provide a plan for IPL opportunities, and its implementation timeline, for all students across the four years of the course.	September 30 th 2022	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendations 2022

That the university investigate opportunities for clinical educators associated with the MSci programme to engage in inter-professional activity such as clinical educator training.		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
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.		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

How conditions, recommendations and areas of concern were addressed

Panel meeting with Senior Management Team (SMT)

The Panel met with senior members of staff to find out how the course had been progressing since the last visit in 2022.

Recommendation 1 May 2022

The Course Leader updated the Panel on plans for an interprofessional 'clinical wash-up' day with attendees from different disciplines, such as sports therapy, taking part. The day would involve students, staff members and clinical educators coming together to discuss challenging cases and situations over the previous academic year.

Covid recovery

The SMT reported that face-to-face teaching had been restored and areas of good practice, developed during the pandemic, had been retained. There is now a blended/hybrid model in place and feedback from students has been very positive. The university team feel they have clear processes in place and have developed agility around timetabling, to the benefit of the students.

The team felt that any gaps in student communication skills resulting from this period had now been bridged.

Post-Covid, the demand for student support services has increased, as has the number of students on the programme with support plans.

Tutors refer students with additional needs and those who have been identified 'at risk' of dropping out, to the central 'Student Success' team. The formation of this team is a positive outcome of Covid and helps remove some of the burden from the course team.

Cost of living crisis

Students' time is managed effectively and with the cost of living crisis and ongoing travel disruption, students are no longer brought in for short lectures or classes. Typically, students will attend university for three days per week and either work from home or attend placements on the other days.

The team expanded that cost of living considerations had resulted in some exams, which had been face to face in January, returning to online exams in May due to travel costs.

Students also remained in their placement for a longer period of time to avoid additional travel costs.

Course viability

It was reported that application numbers were lower than at this time last year. The target is to enrol 30 students for the next academic year, and currently they have made five unconditional offers, seven conditional and one international offer. The university is waiting to hear back on an additional five offers made. Seven students will also progress into year one from the university's foundation course.

Additional marketing events are planned, and numbers are being monitored. The SMT confirmed that even with lower numbers, the course will run, and as a contingency they will over recruit to other programmes in the area, such as physiotherapy.

Staffing

Since the last monitoring visit one lecturer has been promoted to Senior Lecturer and a new full time member of staff has been recruited. The Course Leader is currently discussing the recruitment of another full time member of staff and additional clinic supervisors. The clinic supervisor roles will equate to one full time equivalent post, split across different people throughout the week. The Course Leader introduced the new interim Head of Department (HoD) following the recent promotion of the previous HoD to Associate Dean.

Research

SMT reported that the research strategy had developed over the previous year and scholarly activity had increased.

The Course Leader reported that the university team are leading on a Chiropractic Pain Education Study which will be a collaboration with the other chiropractic providers in the UK over the next 18 months.

The chiropractic team also won an internal 'seedcorn' grant to bring two professors from Chile to Teesside University to speak about both integrated and multimodality care models and explore collaboration opportunities. As a result, they have now set up a summer webinar series and are looking to develop an international, multi profession student conference.

The team have also had a 'placement model' journal article published in the Journal of Chiropractic Humanities, on June 1st 2023.

The team shared that students are involved in and enthused by the different research projects being undertaken within the area.

Tour of Clinic Facilities

The Course Leader confirmed that a timetable was in place to induct students into the clinic the following week. Students and staff will receive a one day induction before patients arrive at the clinic. Currently, the Course Leader is managing the bookings with the students responsible for all other administration around the patient.

A 'frequently asked questions' guide is being produced and will be sent to all patients before attending their appointment. The guide will eventually be uploaded to the Health and Wellbeing Hub website.

The clinic will be free to staff members and students, with the public paying £20 for an initial consultation and £10 for additional appointments.

The location of the clinic is within the current MSK treatment clinic and will be shared with Sports Therapists. The chiropractic clinic has its own dedicated space consisting of three bays and one private treatment room. The Course Leader believes that having an integrated Health and Wellbeing Hub will develop opportunities for students to work within a multidisciplinary school environment, shadowing, at times, within the student dental facility, optometry clinic and sports injury clinic.

The clinic will also be used as a third year placement opportunity during semester three.

The university team felt the current size of the clinic was adequate for the current year four cohort, but funding is in place to expand the clinic in the following years. This would most likely form part of the new building, currently under construction, and would include additional treatment bays/rooms and rehab space. Presently, students have access to a shared strength and conditioning space for rehab sessions.

The university also has its own hydrotherapy pool next door to the chiropractic clinic, which could be utilised by the students and their patients for rehab.

The Course Leader assured the Panel that a full clinical governance audit had been undertaken and students will be expected to sign an annual declaration form declaring any criminal convictions.

Panel Meeting with External Clinical Educators/Placement Providers

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

The Placement

The Panel was informed that students had been attending placements throughout the semesters with the largest provider accommodating three to four students per week for ten weeks. Smaller placement providers had one student per week for the ten week block. Each provider had seen a mixture of first, second and third year students. All commented that although there was a great deal of planning attached to the role, they were enjoying it and had observed increasing confidence in the students over the placements.

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.

The educators commented that the newer students were benefitting from speaking to older year groups so they were aware of expectations around professionalism such as time keeping and appearance.

Whereas year one students only observe during the placement, year two students complete subjective assessments, take a patient's history, and by the end of the year also write patient notes. The placement educators question the students in the presence of patients which results in the generation of good clinical discussions. The providers shared that the students are very enthusiastic and can sometimes challenge the educators clinical reasoning. The educators felt this made them reflect on their own reasoning and decisions daily.

Year three students carry out a limited range of motion assessments and check reflexes. While students can initially under value the non hands-on experience during the placement, with reflection, they learn to understand the importance and value of communication skills and body language.

Placement educators shared that the student feedback form they complete following the placement has been updated and is much more thorough. Educators receive verbal feedback from the students during the training meeting every September.

Training

The educators confirmed that they had completed clinical educator training during the first semester and were also given extra documentation to refer to. They have regular feedback meetings with the course team and the next training session is scheduled for September 2023.

Before the placements started, the educators came into university to meet the students which they found very beneficial.

When the Panel asked the educators 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.

Audit

Initially, an audit was conducted by the university as part of the quality assurance process but there has not been a re-audit since.

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 2022.

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 workshops on assessments and marking were available. The new full time member of staff felt 'fully supported' and had already started working towards her PGCert in Higher Education which leads to a fellowship of the Advanced HE. She reported that there were extensive continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities available, and the information is clearly signposted on the 'BlackBoard' virtual learning environment (VLE).

The Course Leader also shared that dissertation supervision workshops were available to all staff who will be supporting students with this process over the summer holidays. The Course Leader shared that dissertations will be double marked by the supervisor and a second academic.

Research and scholarly activity time is protected and equates to approximately four weeks per year.

The hourly paid lecturer (HPL) commented that she did not have a staff induction at the start of her appointment, however, she had undertaken a full quality assurance process due to her additional role as a clinical educator. Despite teaching one of the modules with a full time member of staff, she could not however, access the online resources.

Placements

The course team confirmed there was a range of NHS and chiropractic specific placements for students in years one, two and three to access. Currently, three NHS sites are used, with a fourth recently recruited. The course team commented that the placements were a great way to develop the students' skills, such as communication, time management and organisation. The Panel was informed that twice yearly debrief

sessions with all placement providers and feedback from students have been used to improve the process and provide a comprehensive overview of the placement model.

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. The course team commented that they had seen a significant increase in student study support plans following Covid and this has affected the way some assessments were held. Due to the large number of students requiring access arrangements, such as separate rooms, some assessments have reverted to online due to problems with accommodating the students.

All practical exams are held in person, but it was reported that not all adjustments could be implemented due to fitness to practise considerations.

Students have been supported and upskilled from year two of the programme in preparation for their dissertation in year four. Students were introduced to evidence-based concepts throughout the year, which were built upon in year three in the 'research methods' module where they were helped to write abstracts. This underpinning knowledge has been essential for the students' development.

Inter professional learning (IPL)

The Panel were keen to learn about the IPL opportunities available to students on the programme. The course team shared that while there were some barriers initially, due to the content coverage in some shared learning modules, they were looking forward to developing this further around the year four provision.

The opening of the clinic will allow students to work within a multidisciplinary school environment, shadowing, at times, within the student dental facility, optometry clinic and sports injury clinic. The team are also planning on setting up case presentations with a multi-disciplinary team to facilitate IPL and group based discussion.

The team shared their aspiration to create an interdisciplinary space designed with a culture of sharing information as part of a modern MSK environment.

Year one placement students work with nurses, dietitians, surgeons, volunteer care teams and physios in the NHS hospitals. They do this on acute frailty, neurological, rehabilitation, haematology and dementia wards.

As previously mentioned, the project with Chile will also allow students access to webinars for knowledge exchange and culminate in an online multi profession student conference.

The team are also supporting an initiative led by chiropractic students (across all three year groups) and the chiro society to hold IPL days with mixed speakers, peer-based discussion and multidisciplinary social activities.

The clinic

The clinic team confirmed that the Health and Wellbeing Hub will open to patients from 1 June, following a comprehensive student induction. Within the hub will be both supervisory and management roles overseeing activities.

Students will complete two shifts per week in the clinic, which will open Monday to Friday. The clinic will not open over the Easter or Christmas holiday period. The team are cautious about overloading the clinic with too many patients during the initial period and are monitoring the bookings carefully. Currently, the clinic will only be available to internal staff and students, before external advertising begins at the end of the summer holidays. Patients can either self-refer, or the college's occupational health team can refer staff or students for treatment.

A dedicated chiropractic rehab space is not currently available; however, existing rehab spaces will be used by the students and patients. The current strength and conditioning space can be used throughout the summer period.

The college team also shared plans to provide a paediatric offering within the clinic as two members of staff specialise in this field. Students also study this area in the 'special populations' module.

Three referral pathways are in place for patients including standard referrals to GPs, emergency referrals to A&E, using the RCC emergency referral form and NHS 999 emergency care services.

Meeting with students

The panel met with four students, two second years and two first year, who were asked about their experiences regarding all aspects of the programme.

Communication

All students gave positive feedback around the pre course communication and admissions process. One student commented that it would have been beneficial to have received more guidance around suggested reading lists prior to enrolment.

Students shared they were benefiting from speaking to students in higher year groups to prepare for exams and placements.

Students felt that the course team acted upon their feedback and positive changes had been implemented following feedback sessions.

One area highlighted as requiring improvement was email communication between staff and students. Students had mixed experiences, with some receiving prompt responses, while others waited much longer for a response. The students would benefit from being reminded of the university's email response policy.

Students also commented that some students had waited much longer than others to receive exam feedback via email.

The Programme

The students were happy with their allocated practical space/technique room and commented that it was very accessible for them to use even outside of their usual timetabled sessions. Inter year mixing in the technique room was beneficial to the students in years one and two in the run up to their exams.

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. Students reported that the Course Leader always tries to help with arranging appointments and students also support each other.

The cost of living crisis has had a detrimental effect on students and some struggled with the additional costs associated with travelling to their placements. Students commented that it would be helpful to know as soon as possible where their placements would be to allow them to purchase cheaper train tickets or even swap placements with other students if more convenient. The students confirmed that hardship funds were available through the 'student life' department.

The panel enquired about their placement experiences and all students spoke positively of attending placement with the clinical educators and reported there had been 'excellent opportunities' to develop. Students however, had not enjoyed the NHS placement at Harrogate Hospital where they had not been able to observe clinical interactions as they were regarded as 'volunteers' and not 'students'. Being a 'volunteer' had however enabled them to have their travel expenses covered by the hospital. The Course Leader confirmed in a later meeting that this placement is being reviewed following student feedback.

Pleasingly, students had only positive experiences of the NHS James Cook University Hospital in Middlesborough. Students were based on the rehab wards and were buddied up with either a nurse or students from other healthcare courses. Following their placements all students are required to complete a reflective essay.

When asked about their experiences of inter disciplinary learning (IDL), students commented that the anatomy and physiology module was shared with other healthcare students. Apart from this, they had not really mixed with students on other healthcare courses within the curriculum. However, the students shared with the Panel that the chiropractic society was very active and was an opportunity for multi-disciplinary knowledge sharing. Students found this very beneficial and spoke positively of it.

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 **four additional conditions, five recommendations and one commendation.**

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)	□
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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 four further conditions imposed at the 2023 monitoring visit, five recommendations and one commendation.

Conditions

1. That the university provides copies of all documentation relevant to the running of the clinic, including clinical governance policies and the CVs of the clinical supervisors by the end of June 2023.
2. That the university provides a plan for access to a dedicated rehab space by September 2023.
3. That the university provides an update on the implementation of their interprofessional learning (IPL) strategy based around the fourth year of the programme by the end of the autumn semester.
4. That the university provides confirmation that the clinic spaces relate to best practice by the end of June 2023.

Recommendations

1. Review and implement access to staff development opportunities for hourly paid lecturers and fractional staff.
2. Provide a clear policy on the timeliness of responding to emails from students.
3. Provide a clear statement regarding the timeliness of feedback to students from both formative and summative assessments.
4. Review/signpost information regarding additional costs associated with travel to placements and signpost students to additional financial support.
5. Review the NHS placement where students are classed as volunteers.

Commendations

1. The Panel commend the university on supporting the development of a student community and the work that the student association is doing.

Signed:



Panel Chair: Grahame Pope

Date: 12/06/23