

The British
Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

Accreditation through partnership

2011-13 Overview report



The British
Psychological Society
Partnership & Accreditation

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Accreditation through partnership

2012 & 2013 overview report

The Society's partnership model of accreditation has been in operation since September 2010 and since that time the Partnership and Accreditation Committee (PAC), and Society Members who serve on our Undergraduate Education and postgraduate Training Committees, have worked hard to continue to promote the highest standards of education and training in psychology in the UK. The excellent work that our colleagues in higher education and in practice do to provide undergraduate, MSc students, and doctoral trainees, with stimulating and rewarding learning experiences is clear to see in the reviews and partnership visits we do. That we have been able to continue to commend such a range of good practice across the country is testament to their commitment to the discipline and to the profession, in what are undoubtedly challenging times for our sector.

The report that follows covers our activities across two academic years: 2011/12 and 2012/13. Having been established in late 2010, PAC's focus during 2011/12 was upon setting out its vision and strategy for the future. Launched in April 2012, this concentrates on shaping and reaffirming the Society's role alongside that of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) by encouraging innovation and creativity, liberalising the framework for accreditation, and better recognising the contexts in which teaching, practice and research are developing both in the UK and internationally.

We have taken this forward in a number of ways, not least through the publication of revised standards for undergraduate and conversion programmes in psychology in September 2012. Developed in light of the recommendations made in the *Future of Undergraduate Psychology in the United Kingdom* report (2011), our new standards enable providers to deliver areas of the required curriculum in *breadth* at level 4 (level 8 in Scotland), freeing up space to concentrate on developing *depth* of knowledge at the higher levels in ways that draw upon the research strengths of individual staff and departments. We ran two successful events for undergraduate programme providers in May 2012 and May 2013 to begin to explore the opportunities this increased flexibility presents, and will deliver a third in February 2014.

In March 2013 we responded to the HCPC's initial proposals for revisions to the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) for practitioner psychologists. In addition to putting forward changes to the modality specific standards that HCPC outline, we also raised some more general points of feedback in relation to the use of language and terminology that, whilst often appropriate to those working with individuals or families in health or social care settings such as the NHS, does not reflect the practice of psychologists working organisationally or in other contexts. HCPC has welcomed our feedback and hopes to be able to consult publicly on a revised draft of the SOPs in spring/summer 2014.

Our work on the SOPs has been a key reflection of the Society's continuing role in taking the profession forward through influencing standards of education and training nationally. Alongside this, our Members have been actively working on reviewing our own standards for MSc and Doctoral programmes to ensure that these more effectively guide the development of the workforce of the future. This review was the focus of our events for postgraduate providers during the autumn of 2013, which built on the similar well-attended events we ran during 2012, and will be ongoing as a priority for PAC during 2014. We aim to publish

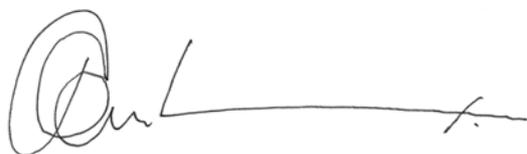
revised standards for launch at the beginning of the 2014/15 academic year, and alongside this are developing supplementary good practice guidance in relation to both the teaching of research methods on postgraduate programmes, and the effective use of psychology technical staff.

During 2013 we completed the first accreditation cycle for Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner training programmes in England – work we began in 2009 on behalf of the national Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. In December 2012 we published a third edition of our PWP course accreditation handbook, which captures the many lessons learned during the first accreditation cycle and begins to bring this aspect of our work under the *accreditation through partnership* framework. In 2013 we implemented our annual monitoring process for PWP programmes for the first time. At the time of writing we are looking forward to commencing the second cycle for those programmes that are still in operation, and from 2014/15 onwards to implementing the outcomes of an IAPT-commissioned review of the PWP role and training, which was undertaken by colleagues at University College London.

In the spring of 2013 we consulted with the Association of Heads of Psychology Departments (AHPD) on a potential framework for the development of international accreditation. There has been much to commend about the proposals that have been developed so far, but equally our AHPD colleagues have helped us identify a number of areas that require further development before we will be able to move to the next stage. We have established an expert reference group to work with us on these, with a view to producing revised proposals during 2014.

Looking back over the past two years, it is heartening to see just how much activity our Members, Society staff, and our university partners have been involved in, and the ways in which this continues to strengthen the work we do. Looking forward, it is clear that we have a lot of exciting opportunities for influence and advancement through partnership working. May we take this opportunity to thank all those who have participated in our work, without whom the progress we have made would not have been possible.

We hope you find this overview report an interesting and informative read. Should you wish to provide any feedback on its contents, please feel free to get in touch with Lucy Horder, Education and Professional Development Manager (Lucy.Horder@bps.org.uk).



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The Society extends its thanks to Dr Ruth Green CPsychol AFBPsS for preparing this report.

Section A: Undergraduate and conversion programmes in psychology

A1: New programme providers

During 2011/12 we considered new undergraduate programmes put forward for accreditation by a total of four providers who had no other Society-accredited provision at that time. All four submitted initial paper-based applications for accreditation following validation of their programmes by their respective institutions; one was visited late during the 2011/12 academic session (concurrently with internal validation), with the remaining three being visited during 2012/13. Ongoing accreditation has been confirmed for all four. No new providers submitted their programmes for accreditation during 2012/13, though three have approached the Society with requests for further information on the process.

To ensure that new providers have made sufficient progress towards meeting our standards, and with a view to achieving a successful visit outcome, in September 2012 we issued a new set of minimum standards that programmes of this kind need to fulfil before a visit can take place. These were implemented for the first time during 2012/13 and include consideration of the programme's progress towards internal validation, and the presence of sufficient appropriately qualified academic staff and support staff, laboratory space, and other resources, or an agreed plan of investment for these.

On the basis of the new providers we have worked with we are able to make the following observations:

A1.1 Good practice

- Good practice was identified in relation two of the new providers that have completed the initial application process.
- Both were commended for the applied psychological focus of their programmes, and for their focus on student employability.
- Both had made use of the increased flexibility available in the revised 2012 standards for undergraduate and conversion programmes to offer breadth of coverage in year 1 and progression and depth of learning and skills development in subsequent years.

A1.2 Conditions of accreditation

- Paper-based applications indicated that all four providers would need to grow resources significantly as their programmes expanded to a full three years. Conditions were set around this issue in all cases.

- Areas that featured most commonly in these conditions related to the provision of sufficient technical support, the expansion of academic staff to ensure an appropriate staff-student ratio (SSR) and delivery of the core curriculum, and provision of dedicated laboratory space, software and equipment to ensure support for practical work.
- Two providers were required to clarify for students the specified combination of modules they would be required to complete in order to meet the curriculum requirements for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC).
- Other areas identified for further action were: expansion of library resources, improving consistency of standards of achievement at each level of study, ensuring assessment reflects the breadth of the core curriculum, and ensuring adequacy of external examining arrangements.

A1.3 Recommendations for further enhancement

- Programmes would benefit from strengthening of relatively weaker core curriculum areas, strengthening of assessment of practical work, and portfolio expansion.

A2: Established providers: new programmes

In 2011/12 we received 14 applications for accreditation of new undergraduate or conversion programmes offered by established providers (i.e. 13 providers expanded their portfolio of accredited programmes, one produced two submissions). There were 13 applications in 2012/13. These numbers match the figure for 2010/11. New programmes offered by established providers are generally not visited, but are integrated into the existing review cycle for that provider.

Of special note is the new programme at the University of Exeter, a BSc (Hons) Applied Psychology (Clinical) submitted in 2011/12, which for the first time offered both eligibility for GBC and an accredited Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner training programme. A second programme met the same standards in 2012/13, the MSc Psychological Theory and Practice at the University of Reading.

A summary of our decision-making processes is presented below:

Approval Outcomes

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval on first submission	11 (78.6%)	6 (46.2%)
Approval following request for information	3 (21.4%)	7 (53.8%) *
Rejected	0	0
Total	14	13

*One programme subsequently withdrew as plans for delivery on a new campus were abandoned

Escalation of Decision-Making

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval by office	3 (21.4%)	4 (30.8%)
Approval escalated to reviewers	11 (78.6%)	8 (61.5%)
Approval escalated to full UEC	0	1 (7.7%) *
Total	14	13

*Referred to Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) to resolve issues of coverage of 3 areas of core curriculum

We continued to follow the same risk-based approach to decision-making as in the previous year, and as explained in the 2010/11 Annual Report. 2012/13 saw a higher percentage of submissions (46.2%) requiring no request for further information, by comparison with the previous two years (21.4%) – this is encouraging and hopefully reflects continual improvement in the clarity of submission guidelines. In 2011/12 more submissions required escalation to reviewers/UEC (78.6%) compared to 2010/11 and 2011/12 (around 60%); it is possible that this reflects greater complexity in the structure and teaching arrangements of the programmes being submitted.

A3: Established providers: modifications to existing programmes

We received 20 applications for approval of modifications to existing accredited undergraduate or conversion programmes in 2011/12, and 9 in 2012/13. One of the 9 was originally submitted in 2011/12 but decision-making was completed in 2012/13 so it has been carried forward.

A summary of our decision-making processes is presented below:

Approval Outcomes

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval on first submission	17 (85.0%)	5 (55.5%)
Approval following request for information	3 (15.0%)	4 (44.5%)
Rejected	0	0
Total	20	9

Escalation of Decision-Making

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval by office	8 (40.0%)	0
Approval escalated to reviewers	12 (60.0%)	9 (100%)
Approval escalated to full UEC	0	0
Total	20	9

Number of submissions has fallen by about half in 2012/13 compared to the previous two years. This reflects a change of procedure to no longer record modifications that do not actually need approval i.e. those relating to modules that do not impact upon coverage of the core GBC curriculum.

There has been an increase in the proportion of submissions escalated to reviewers in 2012/13 (in fact 100%). However it is clear that the modifications submitted in 2012/13 were more complex than those in 2011/12; for example 5 out of the 9 were the outcome of institutional internal review processes which changed programme structures and/or the way in which core curriculum was covered. This latter factor may also explain the higher percentage of requests for further information in 2012/13 compared with the previous two years.

It is encouraging to note that at least 4 of the modifications over the two years were clear responses to our revised guidelines issued following the publication of the *Future of Undergraduate Psychology in the United Kingdom* report (2011), while others are likely to have been made in that context. The creation of integrated modules was a common feature of these modifications.

A4: Established providers: resource reviews

Resource reviews have been undertaken in the third year of the five-year period between partnership reviews for undergraduate programmes, although with effect from 2013/14 the Society has moved to a six year accreditation cycle. During 2011/12 we undertook 45 reviews, and during 2012/13 the number was 25. A summary of our decision-making processes is presented below:

Approval Outcomes

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval on first submission	20 (44.4%)	8 (32.0%)
Approval following request for information	16 (35.6%)	16 (64.0%)
Rejected	1 (2.2%)	0
Carried over	8 (17.8)	1 (4.0%)
Total	45	25

Escalation of Decision-Making

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval on second submission by office	8 (50.0%)	0
Approval on second submission, escalated to reviewers	7 (43.8%)	15 (83.8%)
Approval on second submission, escalated to UEC	1 (16.2%)	0
Approval on third submission	0	1 (16.2%)
Total	16	16

Significantly more reviews were conducted in 2011/12 than the previous year (45 v. 31); in 2012/13 numbers dropped back to a level more in line with 2010/11. As part of the process of moving to the new six year cycle, we have redistributed some reviews to ensure a more even workload year on year.

The rejected submission in 2011/12 failed to provide sufficient data to confirm SSR, and a visit was requested by UEC. UEC were consulted on a submission where there needed to be a consensus view on the acceptability of calculations provided for contributions from Graduate Teaching Assistants. A visit to one institutional provider by the Chair of UEC provided a very useful forum for explanation and clarification of key issues around proposed changes and UEC's methodology, and this good practice should be considered in the future where it may be beneficial.

This submission was carried over to 2012/13, when a satisfactory outcome was achieved.

The most common reason for reviews to seek further information for 2011/12 was for confirmation of recruitment to pending posts, hence approval in these cases was straightforward and could be signed off by the office. In 2012/13 staffing remained the main issue for referral, most frequently because required staffing levels were not being met, and action plans therefore needed to be submitted which required reviewers to look again. Submissions carried forward in both years were those received late in the year, where there had not been time to respond to the request for further information.

A5: Established providers: partnership reviews (paper-based)

Partnership reviews are paper-based and, as noted above, have moved from a five to a six-year cycle during the two years covered by the annual report. Alternate partnership reviews are undertaken as an on-site visit (see **A6**). During 2011/12 we undertook 29 partnership reviews, and 21 during 2012/13. A summary of our decision-making processes is presented below:

Approval Outcomes

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval on first submission	5 (17.2%)	5 (26.3%)
Approval following request for information	20 (69.0%)	8 (42.1%)
Rejected	0	0
Carried over	4 (13.8%)	6 (31.6%)
Total	29	19

Escalation of Decision-Making

	2011/12	2012/13
Approval on second submission by office	5 (25.0%)	4 (50%)
Approval on second submission, escalated to reviewers	14 (70.0%)	4 (50%)
Approval on second submission, escalated to UEC	1 (5.0%)	0
Total	20	8

Reviewers sought clarification with some frequency on the following five issues:

- Breadth and/or depth of coverage of one or more core curriculum areas (coverage of Individual Differences was the issue for the one submission escalated to UEC).
- SSR not meeting the required threshold.
- Lack of clarity or accuracy in statements of GBC requirements in Student Handbooks – the change of terminology from Graduate Basis for Registration (GBR) to Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) may not have been picked up or may be unclear to some programme teams.
- Adequate assessment of core curriculum areas.
- Coverage of ethics and the *Code of Ethics & Conduct* in teaching – the additional emphasis on this area in the revised standards issued following the publication of the *Future of Undergraduate Psychology in the United Kingdom* report (2011) is timely in this respect.

Second submissions were signed off by the office where there was a simple task of either confirming new staff appointments (e.g. by providing CVs or brief biographies) or External Examiner appointments. Submissions carried over were mostly received later in the year, and were awaiting a response from the institution to reviewers' queries.

A6: Established providers: partnership reviews (visits)

We undertook 10 reviews with a partnership visit in 2011/12, and 23 reviews (including three new providers) in 2012/13. The latter figure is unusually high, and reflects a one-off skewing of the overall distribution of our visit load following the introduction of statutory regulation in 2009. For the three academic years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, formerly the Health Professions Council) undertook visits to all of the postgraduate programmes that had been transferred to its list of approved courses, and the majority of these were undertaken jointly alongside Society accreditation. In order to make space in our schedule to meet this demand, many undergraduate visits were pushed back to 2012/13. However, as indicated above, this has now been resolved and more even workload is planned going forward.

A6.1 Good practice

Across both years the average number of commendations per visit was 4.5. Good practice was identified across a wide range of areas, with clear evidence of specific innovations identified in many cases.

The following provides an overview of the features most frequently cited in relation to good practice commendations:

- *Support for students* – staff were seen as approachable, accessible, enthusiastic and responsive to student feedback; their commitment to research inspired their students. Support structures such as personal tutorial, buddying, and mentoring systems fostered staff-student engagement, a sense of value and identity, and a personalised experience.
- *Employability and transferable skills* – many programmes were successful at embedding employability into the curriculum through work placement and/or applied and career-oriented modules; the student experience could also be enhanced through other mechanisms, such as personal development planning, external speakers, internships, support for volunteering, and the programme's engagement with employers and the wider community.
- *Curriculum* – visiting teams commended the well-balanced design of research methods teaching with respect to coverage of both qualitative and quantitative methods; programme structures (both old and new providers) were well-planned, in some cases to reflect revised Society standards, for example to foster integration of core material across the curriculum, or to enhance students' engagement with ethical issues.
- *Research and practical work* – practical work was well-integrated across the curriculum and well-supported by dedicated physical resources for group and individual projects; there was a research-led focus to teaching and learning and to the ethos of programmes, supported by staff research interests and expertise.
- *Learning and teaching* – programmes were successful in developing students as independent learners, with critical and reflexive skills; there were good

practice examples of innovative teaching methods e.g. online problem-based learning and tutorials, and a commitment to the learning and teaching implications of widening participation.

- *Resourcing* – there were commendations for the support/investment programmes received from senior management teams in this respect, and for the funding available to support staff development.

A6.2 Conditions of ongoing accreditation

In 2011/12 only one visit resulted in no conditions of ongoing accreditation, the average number of conditions being 2.1. In 2012/13 five visits resulted in no conditions, and the average number of conditions was 2.0.

Conditions set related most frequently to the following:

- *Curriculum* – programmes were required to clarify/enhance certain core curriculum areas to ensure breadth and depth appropriate to the QAA Benchmark; often this applied only to a subset of the programmes submitted e.g. conversion course or joint honours; a particular focus was the need to enhance practical experience with qualitative research methods.
- *Staffing* – where SSR fell short of threshold conditions were set to either provide a staffing action plan, or confirm approved vacancies; FTE for administrative and technical staff needed confirmation in some cases.
- *Documentation to students* - required amendment to ensure accuracy of statements and structures relating to GBC, the requirement to pass the dissertation, and other inconsistencies.

One provider was required to ensure appropriate standards for students studying abroad who would become eligible for GBC. This would involve ensuring students who were eligible could be identified clearly, and that the 'equivalent modules' studied abroad met core curriculum standards with respect to content and assessment. The encouragement by the Society of more international accreditation work makes this an interesting example of some the issues that need to be addressed.

A6.3 Recommendations for further enhancement

Recommendations are generally of two types – the encouragement of the continuing development of emerging/existing good practice, or the suggestion to make changes to elements of provision not directly covered by accreditation requirements. The following were features of provision noted with some frequency:

- *Resources* – providers were requested to keep SSR and physical resources under review to ensure thresholds would continue to be met, often in the context of growing student numbers; or to monitor staff workloads to ensure parity e.g. with respect to project supervision or time for scholarly activity.

- *Curriculum* – specific core curriculum areas were noted as in need of strengthening (qualitative/practical work in particular); in other cases teams were encouraged to make the most of future opportunities (e.g. a new 20-credit structure) to reflect the Society’s revised standards in curriculum planning e.g. better integration of core areas.
- *Student experience* – parity of student experience could be improved, particularly for students on conversion courses; examples included staff support for project work, feedback on assignments, personal tutoring, and integration into the research culture.
- *Documentation* – course handbooks required modification to ensure accurate statements were include on Society requirements with respect to GBC, and to make more explicit the benefits of Society membership; standard-format module handbooks, and more clearly-articulated expectations for project supervision, and placement visits were other examples here.
- *Assessment* - reviewers encouraged further development of innovative assessments; programme teams were encouraged to ensure a match between module levels and learning outcomes, to make all assessments available at the start of module delivery, to make the moderation process more explicit and to review the assessment schedule in the light of student feedback.
- *Ethics* – teaching of ethical issues and obtaining ethical approval could be strengthened in some cases.

A7: Summary data: accreditation of undergraduate and conversion programmes

A7.1 Numbers of accredited programmes

It is worth noting that there is some ambiguity in relation to the numbers of programmes accredited by the Society. This is largely a result of our processes for accrediting joint or combined honours programmes. Some providers deliver the GBC curriculum through a core psychology component which is the same regardless of the combination of subjects appearing in the final named award. In these cases, our web-based accredited courses search will record *Psychology and X*, or *Psychology with X* as an outcome. Other providers offer named combinations, which may feature different approaches to covering the required GBC curriculum. In these cases, our course search will record individual award titles that are covered by accreditation, such as *Psychology and Neuroscience*, or *Psychology with French*. However, at the time of publication, the Society accredits 413 undergraduate programmes and 58 conversion programmes for 2014/15 entry.

The Society currently accredits undergraduate and conversion programmes across **134 academic departments in 122 universities.**

A7.2 Numbers of partnership visits and reviews undertaken during 2011/12 and 2012/13

	Number of providers	
	2011/12	2012/13
New programme (new provider, visit)	1	3
New programme (established provider, no visit)	14	13
Resource review	45	25
Partnership review (paper)	29	21
Partnership review (visit)	9	20
Total reviews/visits undertaken	98	82

For 2010/11, we therefore undertook reviews or visits to a total of 98 out of 134 providers of accredited undergraduate and conversion programmes, or 73.1%. However, it should be noted that these figures will be skewed by the inclusion of established providers submitting new programmes. Perhaps a better indicator of activity is that pertaining to on-site visit activities only: we undertook 10 visits during 2011/12, or 7.5% of our total visit load, and 23 visits during 2012/13, or 17.2% of our visit load. As has been noted above, 2012/13 was a busy year, reflecting a catch-up from a deliberately quiet year in 2010/11 (when the postgraduate visit schedule was very heavy) and this has been resolved going forward through rescheduling associated with the move to a six-year review cycle. The revised cycle has been designed to ensure that approximately 8.3% of our visit load is undertaken each year (compared with an ideal average of 10% under the previous 10 year cycle).

B1: New postgraduate programmes

During the 2011/12 academic year, we considered a total of 10 new postgraduate programmes, only one of which was at doctoral level. The nine new MSc programmes were, as in 2010/11, considered first under a paper-based review process, which enables new programmes to achieve an accreditation decision prior to accepting (and indeed in most cases, advertising for) their first cohort. Of these nine MSc programmes, eight participated in an on-site visit later the same academic year, and one the following year. One programme was delivered online alongside a campus-based version of the same programme.

During 2012/13 only 3 new postgraduate programmes were considered, all of which were MScs. All three programmes will be visited during the 2013/14 academic year.

B1.1 New Doctoral programmes

The one doctoral programme considered over the 2011/12-2012/13 period was a Doctorate in Forensic Clinical Psychology. This was visited during 2011/12. The visiting team identified some additional development work that was required following their visit ahead of recruitment of the first trainee cohort, and the conditions of accreditation have now been fulfilled.

The programme was commended as an innovative and timely response to changes in service configuration. Conditions were set requiring a mapping of curriculum and placement experiences onto core competencies, further development and planning of appropriate placement provision and placement supervision, formalisation of trainee monitoring and appraisal, expansion of opportunities for trainees to reflect on the integration of forensic and clinical perspectives, development of wider links with forensic psychology service providers, and planning to monitor the impact of the proposed self-funded route.

Overall the Society now accredits 70 Doctoral programmes, activity here representing a total increase of 1.5 % on 2010/11.

B1.2 New Masters programmes

During the two-year period, the Society considered submissions from three forensic psychology programmes, four health psychology programmes, and five sport & exercise psychology programmes. One MSc in Health Psychology was accredited as part of a joint visit rather than through the usual paper-based process. The visit in question also included undergraduate programmes and two existing MScs. Feedback from both the university and the visiting team involved indicated that whilst some visits to multiple programmes work well, new programmes are perhaps better served by a more focused approach.

Overall the Society now accredits 97 Masters programmes, activity here representing a total increase of 14% on 2010/11.

B1.3 Good practice

Good practice was identified via paper-based submissions – in particular the strength of programme teams in terms of breadth of expertise and experience, which enabled both research-led teaching and the development of practitioner skills; staff maintained strong links with outside services, which allowed students to experience a good range of applied settings, for example via placements or voluntary work. Reviewers also noted the quality of physical and learning resources in a number of submissions, and were encouraged by the clear support programmes teams received from senior management.

A wider and more detailed range of commendations followed visits to new programmes. Focussing here on features which were either especially distinctive or innovative, the following may be mentioned:

- Two MSc Sport & Exercise Psychology programmes were commended for their emphasis on exercise psychology.
- Student experience was enriched by the multidisciplinary context of one MSc Health Psychology, which could act as a model for other programmes.
- The same programme very successfully engaged students in the research agenda through a weekly Journal Club.
- One MSc Sport & Exercise Psychology developed, as part of its excellent range of assessments, a very useful Critical Incident Analysis.
- The online MSc Health Psychology was commended for creative use of technology to support both learning/study skills, and staff-student relationships.

B1.4 Conditions of accreditation

Five new programmes received no conditions of accreditation from their paper-based submission, and two of the five subsequently visited received no conditions at this later stage.

A number of conditions required clarification/amendment of different aspects of the course documentation and student handbooks. In a few cases this required ensuring and demonstrating adequate coverage of specific areas of required knowledge.

B1.5 Recommendations for further enhancement

In the majority of first submissions by paper reviewers did not identify areas for further enhancement. In the other cases most areas identified involved some aspect of assessment; examples included the desirability of strengthening assessment criteria to ensure Masters level, including a wider range of assessment types,

removing inconsistencies in word limits, reviewing the use of written exams, and updating reading lists.

Subsequent visits to new programmes identified additional areas for further enhancement, but these were quite varied. In a few cases it was recommended that students received more, and more accurate, information about Society membership and requirements for professional training routes; not all programmes had documented correctly the change from HPC to HCPC.

B2 Established postgraduate programmes

At the beginning of the 2011/12 academic year, the Society accredited a total of 158 postgraduate programmes, comprising 85 MSc programmes, 69 Doctorates, and 4 post-qualification programmes. Of those, 37 (23.4%) underwent a partnership visit during 2011/12, in addition to the partnership visits that took place to new programmes (outlined above), and 18 (11.4%) underwent a partnership visit during 2012/13. The number of actual visits was slightly lower, due to a small number of joint visits covering more than one programme. One planned visit to a Professional Doctorate and Masters in Health Psychology did not take place as the programmes had ceased recruitment.

B2.1 Established Doctoral programmes

Eleven of our 28 visits to established doctoral programmes in 2011/12 were to DClinPsy programmes, 6 to doctoral programmes in counselling psychology, 8 to doctoral programmes in educational psychology, 2 to doctorates in health psychology, and one to a doctoral programme in forensic psychology. Very few (only two) doctoral programmes were visited during 2012/13; this is because all had been visited during the previous three years alongside HCPC approval visits (see paragraph A5 above). The two that were visited were those that opted to undertake HCPC approval as a separate exercise to Society accreditation, and in both cases the visits incorporated both an MSc Health Psychology and a Doctoral programme.

B2.2 Good practice

The extent of good practice identified across DClinPsy provision was truly impressive, with an average of 6.8 features per programme identified by reviewers. Many aspects of provision identified in 2010/11 featured strongly again during this period:

- The excellent relationships that programmes maintained with their stakeholders locally, and with their trainees.
- The high esteem in which graduates from these programmes were held.
- The cohesiveness, expertise and strong leadership of staff teams, which enabled positive response to change.
- The creation of a strong research culture, integrating theory, research and practice.
- The continued development of service user and carer involvement.
- The development and mapping of approaches to the direct assessment of clinical competence.
- Efforts to widen access to the profession (both through selection strategies and through the conceptualisation of diversity throughout the programme).
- High quality trainee support, including responsiveness to feedback from trainees and supervisors.
- Effective support for the programme from the university.

Not mentioned specifically in the 2010/11 report, but a commonly cited feature this time, was the delivery and monitoring of personal and professional development, for trainees naturally, but also in some cases for supervisors and other stakeholders; this was one area where good integration with wider School or Faculty, and its provision, offered real benefits. Other aspects mentioned on a number of occasions were structured delivery of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training, and the management of placements, both in planning stages and for ongoing monitoring and support of trainees. At the same time programmes have developed excellence with respect to distinctive aspects of content and delivery – examples included meeting the needs of their local community through the embedding of language and diversity issues, an emphasis on critical psychology which empowered trainees with respect to non-therapy competencies such as influence and leadership, and a focus on older adults and learning disabilities which has had a visible impact on the growth of local services.

Counselling psychology programmes performed especially strongly in relation to their articulation of a clear philosophy and values around professional identity, leading to their students being valued for their flexibility, their critical and reflexive skills, and their responsiveness to diversity issues. Staff teams were supportive of the needs of trainees, and responsive to feedback from all stakeholders. Good relationships with placement providers led to robust supervision and perceived enhancement of services. It would appear that there is good practice developing around the provision

of online resources to support an increasing number of trainees living at some distance from their programme base.

Similar strengths were outlined in relation to the educational psychology programmes. Less can be deduced from the small number of forensic and health psychology programmes visited, though strong responsiveness to trainee needs and effective preparation of graduates for employment featured highly.

B2.3 Conditions of ongoing accreditation

Of the 11 DClinPsy programmes visited, 3 were awarded ongoing accreditation without any conditions being set. Two aspects of provision were identified as problematic in a number of visits. First, there has in some cases been a decline in the level of administrative resource provided, often due to reorganisation into shared support; providers were required to demonstrate adequate levels of support in post, and to create plans to monitor and retain adequate support over time. Secondly, teams, often in consultation with stakeholders, were required to revise and update specific course requirements, and amend course documentation accordingly; issues here included clarity of assessment criteria, deadlines for returning placement contracts, and provision of up-to-date reading lists and professional ethics and social networking guidelines.

No conditions were set for any educational psychology programme. Counselling psychology programmes did generally attract a number of conditions. The placement supervisory experience and the management of placements was a common feature here; issues included the need to expand the use of qualified counselling psychologists for supervision, to clarify doctoral level practice learning outcomes with respect to competency evaluation, and monitor progress against them more robustly, and to ensure amount of time under supervision met the required standards. There was also an indication that some programmes were coming under administrative pressure, with concerns about the impact on academic staff time and research activity.

B2.4 Recommendations for further enhancement

Recommendations made in relation to DClinPsy visits were very varied and did not fall into clear categories. There was emphasis on improving communication, though in many different ways – examples included reinforcing for supervisors the need to complete placement review forms, reviewing documentation to improve accuracy, consistency and navigation for trainees and supervisors, better informing supervisors of curriculum content and structure, and clarifying requirements for trainees (e.g. on fitness to practice, ownership of work, supervisory time requirements and assessment regulations). Programme teams were encouraged to strengthen relatively weaker aspects of their provision to ensure it met the needs of the changing context of service delivery, for example strengthening theory-practice links, developing collaborative research skills, focussing more on appropriate CBT and leadership skills, and enhancing reflective practice. The need to review and monitor competencies against assessments, identify and respond to failures, and feed back outcomes to trainees in a timely fashion were also of concern. It is also worth noting

that in a number of cases recommendations encouraged the continuation of developing good practice, for example around service user and carer involvement, placement auditing, and engagement with equality and diversity issues.

Visits to counselling psychology programmes identified the most common issues, with respect to recommendations, as placement and supervision – this despite the emphasis on robust supervision identified as good practice.

- In three cases better monitoring of supervision was recommended to ensure sufficient use of qualified counselling psychologists as supervisors, and in one other case to ensure sufficient clinical supervision overall.
- Client anonymity to be protected during online supervision.
- Clear expectations for amount of research supervision time to be set.
- Overall management of placements and dialogue with supervisors to be strengthened.
- Placement information packs to be produced for trainees and supervisors.
- Adverse supervisor reports to be followed up personally.
- Placement learning outcomes to be included in supervisors' report forms.
- Better alignment of curriculum content and structure with current placement experience.

Other issues appearing across visits were guidelines on personal therapy, communication of the respective roles of the BPS and HCPC as the professional body and statutory regulator respectively, and staff workload.

Recommendations in common across educational psychology doctorates covered the following issues:

- Management of placements and communication with supervisors – for example, to enhance links with principal educational psychologists and supervisors, to improve transfer of trainee information across placements, to communicate better with supervisors with respect to core competencies, to give supervisors electronic access to course materials.
- Responsiveness of the programme to the changing practice context and the importance of appropriate external input to this.
- Monitoring and maintenance of sufficient administrative resource.
- Value of widening links with other psychologists and departments in the University.

B2.5 Established Masters programmes

In 2011/12 we undertook visits to four established forensic psychology programmes, three health psychology programmes, one occupational psychology programme and one sport and exercise psychology programme. The latter two programmes were part of a single joint visit which also included accredited undergraduate programmes as well as consideration of a new health psychology programme (see B1.2 above). In 2012/13 we visited one educational psychology programme (Scotland), five MSc programmes in forensic psychology, two in health psychology, four in occupational psychology, two in sport and exercise psychology and one post-qualification MSc/PgDip in clinical neuropsychology. One forensic psychology visit was conducted jointly with the institution's undergraduate psychology programmes. Because of the small numbers of visits in each category the observations below have been combined across all Masters visits.

B2.6 Good practice

The strongest good practice theme to emerge from this group of visits was the programmes' commitment, in various ways, to supporting the professionalism and the employability prospects of its graduates. Learning was well-informed by real-world practice; assessments involved problem-based and practice-relevant learning and the development of transferable skills; good collaborative relationships existed with local service providers and industry; and programmes utilised a range of practice-based guest speakers. In addition, students were well-informed about the role of the Society in developing a professional identity, and were encouraged to become involved in Society activities.

Other common themes were as follows:

- Approachable, accessible and supportive academic staff, who created a collegiate, cohesive ethos for the programme.
- Commitment to the programme from higher levels of senior management, both in terms of the programme's strategic importance and in terms of resourcing.
- Commitment to quality assurance, and responsiveness to feedback from students and other stakeholders.
- A strong research culture, which informed teaching, with students encouraged to engage in cutting edge practical research and to publish.
- Quality of documentation prepared for the visit.
- Quality of feedback on assessed work.

B2.7 Conditions of ongoing accreditation

Eleven of the 24 Masters programmes visited over the 2011/12-2012/13 period received no conditions of accreditation. There was, however, clear evidence of pressure on academic staffing resource in some cases. A number of programmes were required to recalculate or review the staff-student ratio, and if necessary create an action plan for meeting threshold levels of staffing. Related concerns were identified around the management of and contingency planning for staff sickness and absence, the identification of accurate FTE staff contributions to the programme, the lack of seniority of the Programme Director, and staff access to CPD opportunities. In one case the commitment of the senior management team to the continuation of the programme following School restructuring was not clearly demonstrated.

Other issues of concern identified on a number of occasions were as follows:

- Accurate information on accreditation status and the role of the Society and HCPC to be provided
- Ethics components to be strengthened – *Code of Ethics and Conduct* to be explicitly referenced, process of obtaining consent to be reviewed, evidence of obtaining ethics approval for dissertations to be clarified. It is worth noting that the Society's Ethics Committee has commenced work on the development of a framework for the specification of ethical competencies, and how these may be taught and assessed. Its aim will be to provide guidance for psychology educators and professional psychology programmes in due course.
- Aspects of core curriculum to be mapped/strengthened – underpinning theory and knowledge, how to conduct a literature review, qualitative research methods.
- Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning (APL) to be included and clarified.

B2.8 Recommendations for further enhancement

Among a range of issues which appeared in recommendations for further enhancement, assessment featured quite strongly. It can be noted that the focus was often on the benefit of strengthening assessment which encouraged the development of employability skills and applying knowledge in practice. This is reflected in the selection of points made below:

- Range of assessment methods could be widened to include assessment of report-writing and presentation.
- Completed PDP logs could be included in the assessment process.
- Project work could incorporate assessment by presentation or viva voce.
- Module assessment to include understanding of ethical issues

More generally there were recommendations to review consistency of assessment weightings, overall assessment load and amount of feedback, to integrate formative assessment into the assessment strategy, and to provide clear assessment

guidelines for external staff. Some programmes were encouraged to develop their use of electronic submission of assessed work and related provision of electronic feedback. And from the other perspective there were further recommendations to enhance the employability of graduates from the programme e.g. to create short-term placements such as shadowing, to offer mock interviews, to provide more information on career options, to expand the use of peer-led and collaborative working, and to include teaching on supervisory skills in the curriculum.

Other features identified as recommendations on a number of occasions are indicated below:

- Information on GBC, the role of HCPC, routes to Chartered Membership, and the benefits of Society membership should be clarified and strengthened. The Society is developing a resource pack to assist providers with this.
- Staff workloads should be kept under review where growth in student numbers is expected – Programme Directors were identified as potentially at risk here, and succession planning was also an issue; time for professional development and research should be enabled.
- Teams could review ways to further promote diversity – creation of part-time routes was an option mentioned on more than one occasion.
- Use of e-learning facilities could be expanded for students and practice tutors e.g. Moodle, Blackboard.
- Research Methods curriculum could be balanced better by inclusion of more qualitative methods. As part of the postgraduate standards review, supplementary good practice guidance is being developed in relation to the delivery of research methods teaching at M and D level.
- Reading lists could be updated more routinely.
- Quality assurance processes could be strengthened e.g. to enable students to provide feedback on project module or their placement, to increase number of staff-student liaison meetings, to create better feedback forms.
- Management of placements, where offered, could be improved – for example, monitoring of boundary issues, creation of placement files.
- Student access to test materials could be improved

B3. Summary data: accreditation of postgraduate programmes

B3.1 Numbers of accredited programmes

Domain	Established Accredited programmes	Newly accredited programmes 2011/12	Newly accredited programmes 2012/13	Total
Clinical Psychology - DClinPsy	33	0	0	33
Counselling Psychology -DCounsPsy	13	0	0	13
Educational Psychology (Scotland) -DEdPsy	2	0	0	2
Educational Psychology (E,NI,W) – DEdPsy	14	0	0	14
Health Psychology - MSc	29	3	1	33
Health Psychology- DHealthPsy	7	0	0	7
Forensic Psychology - MSc	23	3	0	26
Forensic Psychology – D ForenPsy	2	1	0	3
Occupational Psychology - MSc	20	0	0	20
Occupational Psychology - DOccPsy	0	0	0	0
Sport & Exercise Psychology - MSc	11	3	2	16
Sport & Exercise Psychology - Doctorate	0	0	0	0
Clinical Neuropsychology – PgDip/MSc	4	0	0	4
Total Accredited MScs	85	9	3	97 (+14.1%)
Total Accredited Doctorates	69	1	0	70 (+1.5%)
Total Accredited Post-Qualification Programmes	4	0	0	4
Total increase in programmes				171 (+8.2%)

By comparison with 2010/11, this activity shows a reduction in newly-accredited programmes per year by a half, although we are not aware for any particular rationale that may explain this. We have already approved 3 new MSc programmes for 2013/14 at the time of writing.

B3.2 Numbers of partnership visits undertaken during 2011/12-2012/13

Domain	Total established programmes	2011/12		2012/13	
		Estab.	New	Estab.	New
Clinical Psychology - DClinPsy	33	11	0	0	0
Counselling Psychology - DCounsPsy	13	6	0	1	0
Educational Psychology (Scotland) - DEdPsy	2	0	0	1	0
Educational Psychology (E,NI,W) – DEdPsy	14	8	0	0	0
Health Psychology - MSc	29	3	2	2	1
Health Psychology - DHealthPsy	7	2	0	2	0
Forensic Psychology - MSc	23	4	1	5	0
Forensic Psychology - DForenPsy	2	1	1	0	0
Occupational Psychology - MSc	20	1	0	4	0
Occupational Psychology - DOccPsy	0	0	0	0	0
Sport & Exercise Psychology - MSc	11	1	1	2	1
Sport & Exercise Psychology - Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0
Clinical Neuropsychology – PgDip/MSc	4	0	0	1	0
Subtotal		37	5	18	2
Total	158	42		20	

For the period 2011/12-2012/13 we therefore undertook visits to a total of 62 out of 158 accredited postgraduate programmes, or an average of 19.6% per year. This is virtually the same as the workload of visits undertaken in 2010/11 (19.5%).

Section C: Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner training programmes

C1: The first accreditation cycle

The first cycle of accreditation visits to PWP training programmes commenced in April 2010 and up to the end of the 2010/11 academic year we had undertaken a total of 24 visits to 20 providers of PWP training. In 2011/12 one follow-up visit took place, with two such visits occurring in 2012/13. The small number of visits, and the nature of these as more targeted follow-ups, rather than full accreditation visits, precludes the consideration of any themes that emerged as part of the process.

Coinciding with the completion of the first accreditation cycle, the Society worked with stakeholders to develop a 3rd edition of our PWP course accreditation handbook, which was published in December 2012 and is available via our website at www.bps.org.uk/accreditationdownloads. The handbook includes a chapter on good practice and lessons learned from the first accreditation cycle, as well as some new supplementary guidance on the role of the external examiner.

C2: New programmes

During 2011/12 the Society accredited its first undergraduate programme to incorporate the requirements for both GBC and PWP training into a single award: the BSc (Hons) Applied Psychology (Clinical) at the University of Exeter. A second programme met the same standards in 2012/13: the MSc Psychological Theory and Practice at the University of Reading.

C3: Annual monitoring of established programmes

In January 2013 we implemented our annual monitoring process for PWP programmes for the first time. Of the original 20 training programmes, 14 were still in operation. Of these, 11 were asked to submit an annual monitoring return, including a sample of trainees' competency assessments. Although clarification was sought in relation to a small number of submissions, all 11 were deemed to be satisfactory. This means that:

- There had been no major deviations from the programme that the Society originally accredited.
- There had been no significant changes to the delivery of the programme.
- There were no matters requiring further consideration or scrutiny ahead of the next visit to the programme.

One of those 11 programmes has since stopped running. The remaining three providers will be asked to make a submission during 2013/14.

C4: The PWP Review

In December 2013 the national Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme approved the recommendations made following an extensive review of PWP training undertaken by colleagues at University College London. These recommendations identified a number of developments in relation to the curriculum and the assessment of competence in the PWP clinical method, and also highlighted the need to maintain clear boundaries between the purpose of the accreditation process, and other quality assurance mechanisms such as the role of the external examiner. We are looking forward to further developments over the coming months. Programmes have been advised that any changes to the curriculum will be implemented with effect from the 2014/15 academic year at the earliest.

C5: The second accreditation cycle

At the time of writing we are about to commence our second cycle of accreditation visits to 10 of the remaining 13 training providers.

For further information on the work of the Society and to download a copy of our annual report, please visit our website or contact us at:

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