Town Hall
Experiences of training International students

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University of Birmingham: International Trainees 2014 – 2018 reflections so far ........................

Group of Trainers in Clinical Psychology
13 November 2018
Dr Michelle Fisher and Dr Liz Kent
Selection process

- Follows and mirrors clearing house selection
  - Application form: academic, clinical, references, IELTS (6.5)
  - Online written exercise (skype)
  - Interview (skype – personal suitability; clinical; academic)
    - Additional q around expectations 2018 / resources re studying in UK
    - No trainees for 2018-2019
# Experience of selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of queries</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of applications</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. through to Written Ex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. through to Interview</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee starts</td>
<td>3 (1 had deferred)</td>
<td>1 (1 deferred)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning from selection experience

- Very time consuming: panel for interviews
- Low conversion rate
- Need for human touch
- Candidates withdraw
- Issues around sponsorship
- Understanding market and University goals
Trainees so far = 7

- First trainee 2014, qualified in 2017, returned home to Singapore
- 2015: N= 3
- 2016: N=2
- 2017: N=1
- 2018: N=0
- One failed placement and academic piece of work, triggered course progress panel – need to repeat, cost implications?
Some demographics

- Total of 7 since 2014
- 1 male, 6 females
- Age range = 24 years – 45 years old; mean 32.4 years;

**Country of origin:**
- Singapore x 2
- United Arab Emirates x 2
- Anguilla x 1
- Hong Kong x 1
- Canada x 1
Challenges – trainees prior to the Course

- Needed proof of education, character reference and proof of funding for accommodation – found this invasive!
- Loan was delayed, documents that were required – very stressful! Had to pay whole year accommodation in advance
- Opening a bank account takes one month or longer – couldn’t transfer money, had to use credit card = additional costs; If letter sent earlier process is speeded up
Challenges on the Course / placement

- RIO training – no NI number (took 8 months to get onto RIO!)
  Potential solution: all trainees to apply for an NI number when they arrive here
  • Misconception amongst other trainees they are paid, then personal questions about finances
  Potential solution – cover in the initial talk, do this already!
- Huge financial strain
- Complexities of the NHS: Own bespoke induction – introduce 2018
- Isolation from family and friends
- Language barrier
- One appraisal tutor?
- 2/7 in 4 years failed 2 components and gone to ECP panel
Challenges for us?

- Attitudes / prejudice of a small number of supervisors
- Lack of support from the University as a whole
- Financial burden
- Not familiar with the workings of the NHS, lack of clarity with supervisors/leads
- Understanding processes
- Allow for flexibility as fee paying?
Prior to the course:

• School very supportive when needed letters/proof for loan
• Having an international buddy, advice and support prior to starting
• Appraisal tutor system helpful to feel contained and supported
Top tips: Support

- Compilation of ‘top tips’ from O/S trainees to send once offer made
- Buddy system now in place, contact prior to the course
Prior to the course:

- Timing of conditional offer, more clarity in terms of documents, accommodation, bank account, placement and people’s misconceptions about international students (1: READ FEEDBACK FOR MORE DETAIL)

- Potential solution – STAR?

- More clarity re DBS, way instructions are worded: ‘I understood that I needed to wait to obtain a form to bring to the police station in Canada; no-one was available when calling the DBS office; All I actually needed was to go to local police station and ask for clearance and could do the rest in the UK and to secure accommodation;

- Booklet for international students?
Suggestions for improvement

- Speeding up the process of obtaining a CAS number, UK visa cannot be processed without this, if delayed have to pay a fee for fast track
- Once arrived still looking for accommodation ‘my biggest challenge’
- Have a second year buddy – achieved and contact with Liz and me
Huge positives

- Sharing of knowledge and expertise in their home country, further training opportunities
- International links – supervision and income generation?
- Opportunities for placements abroad?
Thank you for listening!

Any questions?
Please tweet about the Conference

#GTiCP2018