

HCPC approval process report

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|----------------------|---|
| Education provider | Middlesex University |
| Name of programme(s) | BA (Hons) Social Work (Apprenticeship), Work based learning |
| Approval visit date | 02 - 03 April 2019 |
| Case reference | CAS-13400-Y8B8K5 |

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Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Joanne Watchman | Lay |
| Lynda Kelly | Social worker |
| Patricia Higham | Social worker |
| John Archibald | HCPC executive |

Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

| | | |
|------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Heather Clay | Independent chair (supplied by the education provider) | Middlesex University |
| Princess Francis | Secretary (supplied by the education provider) | Middlesex University |
| Daniel Sosnowski | Education provider representative | Middlesex University |
| Jill Yates | External assessor | Independent |
| Angelina Bartoli | External assessor | Nottingham Trent University |

Section 2: Programme details

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Programme name | BA (Hons) Social Work (Apprenticeship) |
| Mode of study | WBL (Work based learning) |
| Profession | Social worker in England |
| First intake | 01 September 2019 |
| Maximum learner cohort | Up to 20 |
| Intakes per year | 1 |
| Assessment reference | APP01973 |

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

| Required documentation | Submitted |
|---|-----------|
| Programme specification | Yes |
| Module descriptor(s) | Yes |
| Handbook for learners | Yes |
| Handbook for practice based learning | Yes |
| Completed education standards mapping document | Yes |
| Completed proficiency standards mapping document | Yes |
| Curriculum vitae for relevant staff | Yes |
| External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable | Yes |

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

| Group | Met | Comments |
|---|-----|--|
| Learners | Yes | This is a programme which is seeking approval for the first time. The panel met with learners from the currently approved BA (Hons) Social Work programme. |
| Senior staff | Yes | |
| Practice education providers | Yes | |
| Service users and carers (and / or their representatives) | Yes | |
| Programme team | Yes | |
| Facilities and resources | Yes | |

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 14 May 2019.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that employers are committed to supporting the programme to ensure it is sustainable.

Reason: From their review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware that the education provider has strong partnership links with local employers. The education provider is a member of the North London Social Work Teaching Partnership, alongside organisations including north London councils and a charity. The visitors were also made aware the education provider had talked with and had run a consultation with employers in local authorities, voluntary sector agencies and mental health trusts about the proposed programme. In the meeting with the senior team, the visitors were made aware employers from the private sector and voluntary organisations had expressed strong interest in the proposed programme. However, the visitors did not receive evidence there was clear support for the programme beyond these discussions and which would demonstrate appropriate support for the programme from employers. The visitors were unclear about the commitment of partners whose co-operation was essential for the success of the programme. The visitors were therefore unable to determine whether the programme was secure and is supported by all stakeholders involved. The visitors require further documentary evidence which demonstrates that employers are committed to employing learners and providing resources to the programme, and that the programme will be sustainable as a result.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure that the resources to support learning are accurate and appropriate to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From their review of the programme documentation, the visitors considered that some of the information available to learners was not clear. For example, reference was made in the programme handbook that learners need to pass the EPA in order to successfully complete the programme, which will determine 'eligibility for registration with the HCPC'. This statement could be misleading for learners, as learners are only eligible to apply for registration with HCPC. The visitors were not able to determine whether accurate and complete information about the programme is provided to learners. They therefore require the education provider to review the programme documentation to ensure the resources to support learning are accurate and appropriate to deliver an effective programme.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Recommendation: The education provider should review their process to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were made aware of the role of the Practice Advisory Panel in ensuring the provision of practice-based learning. In the meeting with learners on the currently approved BA (Hons) Social Work programme,

the visitors were informed there had been delays in the allocation of the final period of practice-based learning. The visitors were also informed by the senior team they were in a position to discuss increasing learner numbers on the programme. From their review of the documentation, the visitors were satisfied this standard was met. However, the visitors recommend the education provider review their process to make sure it is effective in giving all learners on the programme access to practice-based learning to meet their learning needs, given a possible increase in learner numbers.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 04 July 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).