

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Buckinghamshire New University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (hons) Social Work (Uxbridge), FT (Full time)
Approval visit date	21 May 2019
Case reference	CAS-13533-P9J4T0

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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:

Anne Mackay	Social worker in England
David Ward	Social worker in England
Roseann Connolly	Lay
Tracey Samuel-Smith	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit

This was a joint visit with another HCPC panel, who were considering approval of the BSc (Hons) Social Work (Degree Apprenticeship), Work based learning programme. The education provider appointed an internal panel who reviewed each of the programmes. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we came to our decisions independently.

Internal panel members		
Ellie Smith	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Buckinghamshire New University

Leah Hill	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Buckinghamshire New University
Anne Followell	Internal panel member	Buckinghamshire New University
Ashley Church	Internal panel member	Buckinghamshire New University
Steven Pearce	Internal panel member	Buckinghamshire New University
Stephanie Davies	External panel member	Birkbeck College
HCPC BSc (Hons) Social Work (Uxbridge) panel members		
Graham Noyce	Social worker	HCPC
Patricia Higham	Social worker	HCPC
Frances Ashworth	Lay visitor	HCPC
Eloise O'Connell	HCPC executive	HCPC

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Social Work (Uxbridge)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Social worker in England
Proposed first intake	01 February 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 40
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02028

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 new programme, so we met with learners currently on the approved BSc (Hons) Social Work programme delivered at High Wycombe.
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 17 July 2019.

2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure appropriate, clear and consistent information is available to applicants which enables them to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: In their mapping, the education provider referenced the Programme specification, which included information about the typical applicant profile and programme-specific entry requirements. From reviewing the website, the visitors noted a second Programme specification (dated April 2013, October 2018) which the programme team confirmed, was relevant to the current programme and academic year, rather than the new programme. The minimum UCAS tariff points outlined in the web version differed to the version submitted in the documentation. The visitors were

unclear how applicants would gain the information they required around academic entry standards, to be able to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer.

In addition, the visitors noted that the programme specifications did not make a distinction between the programme currently offered in High Wycombe, and the new programme being approved in Uxbridge. The senior team informed the visitors that information about the Uxbridge programme would be available on the website once the programme gained approval. The programme team confirmed the High Wycombe and Uxbridge programmes would run separately, with a cohort being recruited specifically for Uxbridge. This would mean the cohort at High Wycombe starts in October, while the cohort at Uxbridge starts in February. The visitors were unclear how applicants would gain the information they required around where the programme was delivered, to be able to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer on the new programme.

Therefore the education provider must provide evidence that demonstrates the information which will be available to potential applicants for the Uxbridge programme. This evidence must demonstrate it is sufficient for applicants to make a considered choice about whether to apply to and accept a place on the programme.

2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the equality and diversity policies, in relation to applicants to the programme, are implemented and monitored.

Reason: In their mapping, the education provider referenced Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies available on their website. From their review of these policies, the visitors noted these related to students, employees or visitors. They could not find a policy applicable for applicants to the programme. The mapping also referenced the Annual monitoring policy published by the Academic Registry. From this, the visitors learnt of the School Annual Monitoring Meetings (SAMMs). One theme of the SAMMs is marketing, applications and recruitment which covers the application numbers for the coming year and enrolment numbers for the current year. The senior and programme teams informed the visitors about how the SAMMs work for retention and achievement. The visitors received a copy of a SAMM report from 2017-18 and identified in section SAMM 1, discussions about application, recruitment and marketing. Within this section, the visitors noted the comment 'The School of Health Care and Social Work demonstrates a significant widening participation demographic'. However, the visitors were unable to identify what this meant specifically for the social work programme. The visitors were therefore unclear about how the policy laid out by the Academic Registry is translated and implemented by the programme, including how the policies are monitored. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about how the equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored, at a programme level, in relation to applicants.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate the programme management structure in place for the Uxbridge programme and how this ensures the programme is effectively managed.

Reason: The visitors were referred to the Programme handbook which identified five key role descriptions for the management of the programme. Lecturers were not identified within this, nor were names provided to match these roles to individuals delivering and managing the programme. For example, from the Programme handbook, and the programme team meeting, the visitors were unable to identify who the programme leader would be for the Uxbridge programme.

The senior team confirmed that staff (academic and support) would need to be based at Uxbridge, though it was fairly routine to travel between the High Wycombe and Uxbridge sites. The programme team confirmed that staff would be travelling between sites and that at the start of each academic year, it would be decided which staff were to be delivering the modules at both sites. They confirmed, that due to the different start dates for the High Wycombe (October) and Uxbridge (February) programmes, it would be possible to deliver the modules without potential clashes. The visitors also learnt that the process of determining who would be teaching which modules and when, had not been undertaken.

From this information, the visitors were unclear about the programme management structure in place for the Uxbridge programme, including who will be involved in leading, managing and delivering the programme. Therefore the visitors require further evidence which demonstrates the programme management structure in place for the Uxbridge programme, and how this ensures the programme is effectively managed.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how regular and effective strategic collaboration occurs with practice education providers, around programme design and delivery.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider referenced pages 29-31 of the Programme handbook. From their review of this document, the visitors noted it ended on page 22. The programme team confirmed the mapping should have referred to the Practice Curriculum First and Final Placements: Social Work document. On these pages, the visitors learnt about how quality assurance of practice-based learning is undertaken. For example, through placement audits, quality assurance of practice educators and work based supervisors, and work based learning courses for supervisors. The visitors recognised how the programme ensures the quality of practice-based learning on an ongoing basis.

However, they were unclear about the regular collaboration, at a strategic level, with practice education providers to influence the design and delivery of the programme. The senior team confirmed there was no regular forum in place for practice education providers and the programme team to discuss issues relating to the programme design and / or delivery. In addition, the practice educators confirmed they had not been involved in discussions about the development of the new programme. The programme team outlined the good relationships between the programme and practice-based learning, confirming these arrangements are currently informal between specific individuals. There is a move within the education provider for more senior management to meet with the local authorities and they are working on formulating these arrangements at a more strategic level.

From this information, the visitors were unclear how the programme undertakes regular collaboration which influences the design and delivery of the programme. In addition, they were unclear how the arrangements for more strategic involvement will ensure regular and effective collaboration. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the programme ensures the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: In the mapping, the visitors were referred to two curriculum vitae for individuals responsible for the development and administration of practice-based learning. The visitors were unclear from this, of the process used to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning. The programme team confirmed there would be 25 learners per cohort on this programme and the Degree Apprenticeship, also being visited. These learners are on top of the 158 learners currently on approved social work programmes at the education provider. The senior and programme teams confirmed that a major source of ensuring the availability and capacity of practice-based learning was via individuals asking to complete Stage 1 and 2 Practice Educator Courses (PEPS). This was because the provider offered these courses for free, if the local authority committed to accepting a learner. The visitors recognised how this informal process had worked well for the provider previously. However, they were unclear about how, with the increased number of learners, this process would continue to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. The visitors received no further information about a formal process used to ensure there will be a sufficient number so that all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs. Therefore the visitors require evidence which demonstrates how the programme ensures the availability and capacity of practice-based learning.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the programme will ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider referred to the module descriptor for SW622 Inter-Professional Practice. The module descriptor states that “This module will enable the student to engage effectively and meaningfully with colleagues from other professions.” The visitors understood that this module would include lectures which would involve teaching from professionals in other relevant professions, and that learners would experience interprofessional learning while undertaking work based learning. The visitors were not clear whether the module would involve learners learning with and from learners in other relevant professions. At the visit, the programme team said that they have previously had sessions where learners on social work programmes would engage in learning with learners on the nursing programmes offered by the education provider. The programme team said that they no longer have these sessions, due to the challenges in the different schedules for these learners to find time for sessions together. The programme team highlighted that learners have opportunities to

work in interprofessional teams in the work place. The visitors did not hear any other examples of specific scheduled time for learners on this programme to learn with and from learners in other relevant professions. Therefore, the visitors require further information about how the programme will ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, learners in other relevant professions to determine whether this standard is met.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is an effective process in place for obtaining appropriate consent from learners.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider referred to the Ethics Policy, which contains a section in relation to obtaining consent of vulnerable people or groups, or their representatives. The visitors did not see information about obtaining consent from learners on the programme, for situations where they take part as service users themselves in practical and clinical teaching. At the visit, the learners said that they were not aware of any explicit consent procedure, and suggested that consent is implied when you start the programme, as it is expected you will take part in those kind of activities. The programme team confirmed that there is no formal consent procedure for learners in place, and that they would look to develop one.

The guidance for this standard states that the education provider should not assume that the broad consent a learner gives at the beginning of the programme, will cover all situations. In some cases, it will be necessary to get explicit consent from learners in relation to them taking part in a specific activity, such as role play. The visitors have not seen or heard of a process for obtaining appropriate consent from learners, therefore they cannot determine whether this standard is met. The visitors require evidence that there is an effective process in place for obtaining appropriate consent from learners.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they monitor practice educators attendance at, or completion of, refresher training to ensure they are up to date with information appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: In the mapping, the education provider referred to the Practice Learning Quality Assurance pages of the Practice Curriculum Handbook. This outlined the Work Based Learning Courses for Supervisors and the Practice Educator Courses (PEPS) run every year. The visitors recognised the initial training supervisors and practice educators undertake prior to receiving a learner. However, the visitors were unclear about how regularly refresher training was provided to ensure supervisors and practice educators remained up to date with the information necessary to support learning and assess learners effectively. The practice educators confirmed they attended refresher courses, though they did not elaborate on the timing or the content of these. They did confirm the education provider uses Blackboard to communicate changes about the programme to the practice educators. However, the visitors noted no additional information was provided about how regularly refresher courses / Blackboard messages

are utilised nor how the provider monitors these to ensure attendance at, or completion of, refresher training. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how this standard is met.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

Second response to conditions required

The education provider responded to the conditions set out in section 4. Following their consideration of this response, the visitors were satisfied that the conditions for several of the standards were met. However, they were not satisfied that the following conditions were met, for the reasons detailed below. Therefore, in order for the visitors to be satisfied that the following conditions are met, they require further evidence.

2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the equality and diversity policies, in relation to applicants to the programme, are implemented and monitored.

Reason condition not met at this time: From the initial documentation and visit, the visitors were unclear on how equality and diversity policies were implemented and monitored, at a programme level, in relation to applicants. In response to the condition, the education provider referred to data screenshots for 2017-18 and 2018-19 as evidence. The screenshots provided information on the numbers and percentages of different diverse groups with widening participation on the programme. The visitors recognised that the screenshots demonstrated the statistical outcome of the equality and diversity policies and therefore the results of the monitoring. However, the visitors remained unclear about what happens to the results of the monitoring and how these are fed back into the development of the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further information on how the policies and processes of the Academic Registry are implemented for the social work programme.

Suggested documentation: The visitors require further information about how the equality and diversity policies are translated and implemented for the programme.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how regular and effective strategic collaboration occurs with practice education providers, around programme design and delivery.

Reason condition not met at this time: From the initial documentation and visit, the visitors were unclear on the strategic collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers. In response to this condition, the education provider provided a screenshot of an individual's contact details. The screenshot does not clearly outline the individual's role or how their position helps to ensure regular and effective strategic collaboration around programme design and delivery. Nor has the education provider given a reason as to why this information has been provided. The visitors were therefore unclear how the evidence demonstrated strategic collaboration between the

education provider and practice education providers. Therefore the visitors require further documentation detailing how the education provider strategically collaborates with practice education providers on a regular and effective basis, around programme design and delivery.

Suggested documentation: The education provider must provide further evidence of their strategic collaboration with practice education providers around programme design and delivery to ensure regular and effective collaboration throughout the programme.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they monitor practice educators attendance at, or completion of, refresher training to ensure they are up to date with information appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason condition not met at this time: From the education provider's initial submission and visit, the visitors were unclear how regularly refresher courses / Blackboard messages were utilised and how the education provider monitored these to ensure attendance at, or completion of, refresher training. In response to this condition, the education provider stated the practice lead arranges 4 sessions for on-site supervisors/work based supervisors and practice educators to refresh their understanding of their roles. This also gives the practice lead an opportunity to update practice educators about recent developments in social work training. To evidence this, the education provider referred to examples of practice educator sessions and master class sessions. The visitors noted that the information clearly showed the contents of the training and were therefore satisfied with the content being delivered. However, the visitors were unclear about how the education provider monitored practice educators attendance of these training sessions to ensure all are appropriately prepared to support learning and assess learners effectively. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to demonstrate how they monitor the attendance of practice educators at refresher training.

Suggested documentation: The education provider must provide further documentation about how they monitor attendance of practice educators' refresher training sessions.

Section 6: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, and the request for further evidence set out in section 5, 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 06 November 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](#).