

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Buckinghamshire New University
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Social Work (Degree Apprenticeship), Work based learning
Approval visit date	21 - 22 May 2019
Case reference	CAS-13696-V4F4C5

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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:

Frances Ashworth	Lay
Graham Noyce	Social worker
Patricia Higham	Social worker
Eloise O'Connell	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 (Uxbridge) programme. The education provider appointed an internal panel who reviewed each of the programmes. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come 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
Steven Pearce	Internal panel member	Buckinghamshire New University
Ashley Church	Internal panel member	Buckinghamshire New University
Stephanie Davies	External panel member	Birkbeck College
HCPC BSc (Hons) Social Work (Uxbridge) panel members		
Anne Mackay	Social worker	HCPC
David Ward	Social worker	HCPC
Roseann Connolly	Lay visitor	HCPC
Tracey Samuel-Smith	HCPC executive	HCPC

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Social Work (Degree Apprenticeship)
Mode of study	WBL (Work based learning)
Profession	Social worker in England
First intake	01 September 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 25
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02029

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	Not Required

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 demonstrate that the admissions process will give applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place the programme.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider referred to the Programme Specification document which contained information about the programme and admission requirements. In the programme specification, the visitors read that applicants will be required to have cleared the employer's selection process, which is usually undertaken jointly with the education provider. From the information provided, the visitors were not clear whether applicants for this programme would also undergo the standard admissions procedure for applicants, or what the selection process from

employers would include. At the visit, the programme team explained that there will be a selection process initiated by employers, and the selected applicants would then be invited to attend a selection day at the education provider, similar to the process for the current approved social work programmes. The programme team also highlighted that applicants for this programme will be required to undergo assessments to meet the employer's criteria and degree apprenticeship requirements.

The visitors understood that the admissions process would be a collaborative process between the education provider and employers, and that applicants would need to meet the requirements of both. However, the visitors have not seen how applicants will be informed of these requirements, which would give them sufficient information about the selection and application process. For example, the visitors have not seen any draft advertising material which would be presented to potential applicants. The visitors require further evidence information of the information provided to applicants, which demonstrates that applicants will have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the programme is sustainable.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider said that degree apprenticeships are a core part of the business plan, with a number of apprenticeships already being delivered and some being developed. The education provider did not submit evidence of the arrangements they have in place with the employers, who will be involved with delivering the programme. At the visit, the visitors did not meet with any senior members from the employers who will be involved in delivering the programme. The programme team discussed the arrangements they have with five local authorities, and the collaboration they have had so far in developing the programme.

The visitors heard verbal reassurances from the education provider that they have arrangements in place with the employers, who are committed to delivering the proposed programme. However, the visitors have not seen evidence of their commitment to the programme, and have not heard from senior members from the employers about their commitment. This standard requires that the education provider can demonstrate that the programme is secure and is supported by all stakeholders. The visitors have not seen evidence of support from the employers involved in delivering this programme. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about the collaboration and commitment between the education provider and employers which demonstrates the programme is sustainable.

3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there is an effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints, considering learners on this programme are both employees and learners.

Reason: To evidence this standard, the education provider referred to their student complaint policy and academic appeals process. Learners on this programme will be both learners and employees for the duration of the programme. The visitors were not

clear if learners would follow a different process if they made a complaint while undertaking work based learning at their place of employment. If the learners were to follow the employer's complaints process, the visitors were not clear how the education provider ensures this is a thorough and effective process, or how learners would be aware of what process to follow.

At the visit, the programme team explained that the process the learner should follow will depend on the nature of the complaint. For example, the education provider said if it is an issue at the workplace, the employer processes will take priority. The programme team said they are currently still working out the details of this process for apprenticeship learners. The visitors have not seen information about how the education provider ensures the employer's complaints process is effective, or how the learners are made aware of this process, should they need to use it while on the programme. The visitors were also not clear how learners would be aware of what process they should follow (whether it is the education provider's or employer's process) for a complaint made while on the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further information which demonstrates there is an effective process in place for receiving and responding to learners complaints for apprenticeship learners.

4.6 The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning and teaching methods are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Reason: For this standard, the education provider referred to the Programme Specification document and module descriptors. The education provider submitted a draft delivery schedule for the programme, which indicates that learners will be work based for four days a week, with scheduled teaching and study time on Friday each week. The visitors understood that Friday would be block teaching days, however it was not clear what the scheduled taught hours would be for those days. While there was some indication of assessment on those days, it was not clear what the assessment schedule will be.

At the visit, the programme team explained the core teaching hours, and that learners would be required to attend teaching sessions at the education provider each Friday for seven hours. The programme team also said that teaching hours will also depend on the number of hours allocated to each module. This standard is about making sure that the methods you use to deliver the programme support learners to achieve the learning outcomes. The schedule gives some indication of teaching time, independent study time and assessment, and the programme team further explained the details of delivery of the programme. However, the visitors were only presented with a draft copy with limited details in the initial submission. While the visitors had heard some verbal reassurances about the learning and teaching time on the programme, the visitors have not seen a detailed timetable or assessment schedule, they could not determine how this would work in practice. Therefore, the visitors require further information about the delivery of teaching and taught content, which demonstrates the learning and teaching methods are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

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 SW607 Collaborative Working and Organisational Change. 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 seminars 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.

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 is approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 22 August 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](#).