

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Sunderland
Name of programme(s)	BA (Hons) Social Work (Integrated Degree Apprenticeship), Full time
Approval visit date	18-19 June 2019
Case reference	CAS-14410-Z5J0G9

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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:

Ian Hughes	Lay
Anne Mackay	Social worker in England
Patricia Higham	Social worker in England
Rabie Sultan	HCPC executive
Temilolu Odunaike	HCPC executive (observer)

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.

Sue Brent	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland
April Allan	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland
Susie Robertson	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Sunderland

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work (Integrated Degree Apprenticeship)
Mode of study	WBL (Work based learning)
Profession	Social worker in England
First intake	01/09/2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	2
Assessment reference	APP02076

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 ask for 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.

Type of evidence	Submitted
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Information about the programme, including relevant policies and procedures, and contractual agreements	Yes
Descriptions of how the programme delivers and assesses learning	Yes
Proficiency standards mapping	Yes
Information provided to applicants and learners	Yes
Information for those involved with practice-based learning	Yes
Information that shows how staff resources are sufficient for the delivery of the programme	Yes

We also usually ask to meet the following groups at approval visits, although there may be some circumstances where meeting certain groups is not needed. In the table below, we have noted which groups we met, along with reasons for not meeting certain groups (where applicable):

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	Met learners from existing BA (Hons) Social Work programme
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

Senior staff	Yes	
Practice educators	Yes	
Programme team	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 02 August 2019.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate whether the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme, should or should not be on the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The education provider had provided a job description and person specification for the role of a senior lecturer. The education provider explained that the senior lecturer within the programme team, who is familiar with the programme, is appointed to a programme leader role. The decision is usually made by the team leader and head of school, in consultation with the programme team. The visitors noted that the person specification cited essential criteria such as minimum qualifications, but did not specify if there is a requirement to be on the relevant part of the Register. The proposed programme leader for this programme is currently on the HCPC Register, but the visitors were not clear whether this is a requirement for the role and whether this will be a necessity for future replacements. Therefore, the education provider must clarify whether it is a requirement for the programme leader to be on the relevant part of the Register, and will this also apply in future for suitable replacements. The education provider should explain if non-registered senior lecturers will be allowed to take up the role of a programme leader in future, and if so, under what circumstances and how will they be supported.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that there is a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the student complaint process document as evidence for this standard. Upon reviewing the evidence, the visitors noted there was a complaints process in place for learners on practice-based learning. However, the visitors noted this process applies to learners on non-apprenticeship programmes such as the BA (Hons) Social Work programme, and there was no clarity regarding what process should be followed by learners on the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship programme. As this programme is an employer-led programme involving learners currently employed by the local authority, the visitors were not clear from the documentation whether the learners should follow the education provider or their employer's complaints process. Therefore, the visitors could not determine whether this standard is met. As such, the visitors require further evidence that clearly defines which process the learners should use if they should need to raise a complaint, and how learners will be informed about this process. Additionally, the education provider must demonstrate how all parties involved are informed of this process so that it is clear to all involved.

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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme will ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the module descriptors and staff curriculum vitae, as evidence for this standard. From reviewing the evidence, the visitors could not find any evidence regarding how interprofessional education will take place, for this programme. At the visit, the programme team mentioned about having joint seminars and organising events, which will involve learners learning and interacting with learners from other professions. However, as this was not evidenced in any of the documentation, the visitors were not clear how learners would be able to learn with and from learners in other relevant professions. Therefore the education provider must provide evidence demonstrating how interprofessional education will take place, and how will learners learn with and from professionals and learners, in other relevant professions.

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 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](#).

