

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Warwick
Name of programme(s)	BA (Hons) Social Work (Integrated Degree Apprenticeship), Work based learning
Approval visit date	18 - 19 September 2018
Case reference	CAS-13011-P0H4T9

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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:

Christine Stogdon	Social worker
Mohammed Jeewa	Lay
Beverley Blythe	Social worker
Shaista Ahmad	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.

Patt Tissington	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Warwick
Kieran Platt	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Warwick

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
Proposed First intake	01 January 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01872

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	Reason(s) for non-submission
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	This was provided for the current approved MA in Social Work programme.

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

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	We met with learners from the current approved MA in 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 16 November 2018.

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 that appropriate information about the programme is provided to potential applicants, to ensure that they can make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that applicants are provided with information about the internal application process (stage 1) and the joint assessment process (stage 2) when applying for the programme. All potential applicants will be invited to an open day before they are expected to make a decision about taking up a place on the programme. In discussions with the programme team, there were no final details available about what information would be provided to applicants prior to taking up a place on the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further clarification as to what information is available to potential applicants. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine how prospective applicants are able to make an informed choice about whether to apply for a place on the programme.

2.3 The admissions process must ensure that applicants have a good command of English.

Condition: The education provider must ensure applicants are aware of the English language requirements needed to communicate effectively with service users and carers and educators to complete the programme successfully.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted learners would need to have a minimum of a level two qualification in English before they can apply for the programme. The visitors were unable to determine what a level two qualification was in relation to the necessary level of English as set out in standard 8 of the SOPs for Social workers in England. As such, the visitors were unable to assess if the admissions process would ensure learners have the necessary level of English set out in standard 8 of the SOPs for social workers. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate how the English qualification required will ensure applicants meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) once they complete the programme.

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 ensure that there is a process in place to identify and appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced person to hold overall professional responsibility for the programme.

Reason: For this standard, the visitors were made aware of the individual who currently has overall professional responsibility for the programme. The visitors noted that the current staff member identified was appropriately qualified and experienced. In the documentation, a policy was in place for identifying a programme leader. However, there was no detail provided within the policy about how the education provider would ensure that the individual appointed is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other alternative arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors learned that HCPC registration would be a requirement for any candidate selected for the role and this would be part of the role specification. However, as the visitors were not provided with this person specification for the role, they could not determine that process ensures that the education provider will continue to appoint a suitable person for the role. As such, the visitors require evidence which demonstrates that there is an effective process in place which ensures that when recruiting a person with overall professional responsibility for the programme they will be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

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 that the process in place to ensure the availability of practice-based learning for all learners on the programme is effective.

Reason: In a review of the documentation, the visitors understood that learners would undertake practice-based learning as part of their apprenticeship. In discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider is in the process of agreeing where the practice-based learning will take place with employers. However, as the visitors did not have sight of these agreements they could not determine what arrangements are in place. As such, the visitors were unable to determine that an effective process is in place which ensures that all practice education providers associated with this programme have availability and capacity to deliver practice-based learning for all learners. As such, the visitors require further information regarding the process the education provider uses to ensure there are sufficient practice based learning opportunities for all learners, across the three years, including the agreements in place between the education provider and the practice education providers. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors learned there are currently six confirmed teaching staff appointed to deliver the programme. There are plans in place to recruit three new staff members to the team. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were informed that recruitment is currently ongoing. The visitors considered that if for any reason this recruitment did not happen, there would be implications for the programme, including a potential strain on staff resources. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the education provider has a recruitment plan to ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that subject areas are taught by staff with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors learned that there are six confirmed teaching staff appointed to deliver the programme. The programme team confirmed plans were in place to recruit three new teaching staff members with relevant knowledge and expertise. As detailed information was not available about the number of the staff members involved in the teaching of the programme, and which teaching staff would be teaching particular elements of the programme, the visitors were unable to make a judgement on whether subject areas will be delivered by educators with relevant knowledge and expertise. Therefore, the visitors

require further evidence, which demonstrates that the education provider has staff members in place with the requisite specialist knowledge and experience to deliver the programme.

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 demonstrate that programme resources are readily available to learners and educators and are used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors learned that the majority of the learning resources were available through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)-Moodle. This would allow learners to access materials from teaching sessions and interactive content whilst completing the practice-based learning element of the programme. During the resources tour, a demonstration of the VLE was shown, which is currently used for the MA in Social Work programme. As well as this, the visitors were introduced to a programme called OneFile, which learners will use to complete reflective learning logs and record observations whilst in the practice-based education setting. However, the content for the OneFile programme and VLE is currently being written and is yet to be finalised. As eighty per cent of this programme is delivered offsite, the visitors considered it was paramount that the learners could access the resources to support learning and teaching activities. However, the visitors could not determine that the resources are readily available or effectively used to support the learning and teaching activities because they did not have sight of the content for this programme. Therefore, the education provider must provide evidence that demonstrates resources which support the learning and teaching activities are in place and accessible to all learners and educators across the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must amend documentation to ensure clear information is provided to learners about the process to raise complaints.

Reason: From a review of the evidence provided the visitors were unclear as to what complaints process the learners should follow. During the programme team meeting the visitors were informed that learners should follow the education provider's process for receiving and responding to learner complaints. However when meeting the employers from the practice based learning environment, the visitors were informed that learners should follow the employer's process. Therefore, the visitors were unclear which process the learners should be using or how learners, academic staff and practice educators would know what process to follow. The visitors where therefore, could not determine whether this standards 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 all parties involved are informed of this process so that it is clear to all who could be involved.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revise documentation to ensure learners are provided with clear and accurate information about learning outcomes to ensure the standards of proficiency (SOPs) are met for social workers.

Reason: From a review of the module guide “key issues in professional social work”, the visitors noted that the timetable shows the adults and children and families pathways running concurrently and not consecutively for the degree apprenticeship. The visitors noted that as a result of this delivery model, learners would complete either a child or an adult pathway for the degree apprenticeship. In discussions with the programme team, it became apparent that the information in the documentation was inaccurate as learners would be expected to complete both an adult and a child pathway. Therefore, the visitors require that the information in the documentation is amended to ensure that learners are provided with accurate information about the learning outcomes they are expected to meet in order to ensure that all of the SOPs are met. Particularly, the learning outcomes must reflect how learners will meet the SOPs in Section 2 (2.1 and 2.3). In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must state the teaching methods used to deliver the programme, and demonstrate how these are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors learned that in addition to seminars and lectures, all learning materials will be available on the online platform Moodle, which will be available to learners at all times. In the facilities and resources meeting, the visitors were told that there are plans to develop a range of teaching methods such as lecture room capture (to record lectures), polls, OneFile system and the content for Moodle but these methods are currently in the stages of development and are yet to be finalised. As the visitors were unable to view all the learning and teaching methods on the programme they were unable to determine if these were appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes. Therefore, the education provider must provide information about the teaching methods specific to the delivery of the programme’s learning outcomes, which will be accessible to all learners on the programme, and demonstrate how these will ensure learners will achieve the learning outcomes.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must clarify the mandatory requirements for online engagement in the programme, the consequences of not engaging, and how this is communicated to learners.

Reason: In a review of the documentation, the visitors learned “100% engagement is mandatory”. The visitors understood that if a learner misses two or more sessions in

any one module, it is referred by the tutor to the course director. Contact would be made with the learner to discuss mitigation planning for the missed learning and an action plan would be completed. The visitors noted that these learners were employees who are entitled to annual leave of anywhere from 25 to 35 days per year, which could be requested during the teaching of an entire module. In discussions with the practice educators, this was a requirement of the contract so they would not be able to refuse annual leave requested by the employee. The programme team indicated that if learners missed online sessions due to annual leave there was no requirement in place for learners to catch up with the learning. Rather this was left for the learners to decide if this was appropriate. As such, the visitors were not satisfied that online attendance would be monitored appropriately and learners were made aware of the consequences of not attending remotely. Therefore, the visitors require evidence of how attendance is monitored when taking into account learners annual leave requirements throughout the programme, and how this is communicated to learners.

5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Condition: The education provider must clarify the range, duration and structure of practice based learning, to demonstrate that it supports the achievement of the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

Reason: In a review of the documentation, the visitors were unable to see information regarding the structure, duration and range of practice-based learning for this programme. As such, they were unable to determine how 50 learners each year would have access to the practice-based learning element of the programme, which supports the achievement of the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers. Through discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that the education provider intends to ensure that there are practice-based learning opportunities in a variety of settings, including a learning experience of 30 days in an alternative setting. However, there was no rationale provided as to why this number had been chosen. As such, the visitors were unable to establish what arrangements are in place between the education provider and the employers regarding delivery of practice-based learning for this programme. The visitors were also unable to see when, where, and for how long the practice-based learning opportunities would take place, or how their approach will support the achievement of the learning outcomes and SOPs for social workers. As such, the visitors require further evidence of the structure, duration and range of practice based learning for learners on this programme, and how it is appropriate to support the achievement of the learning outcomes and SOPs for social workers. In this way, the visitors can determine whether this standard is met.

5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the level of supervision on the practice-based learning element of the programme is appropriate and this requirement is clearly communicated to all involved.

Reason: In the apprentice handbook on page 21, it states the role of a practice educator is “to provide supervision once a month”. In discussions at the visit, there was confusion about the frequency of practice educator meetings with the apprentice. Some employers understood this to take place four times in a year (quarterly) whereas others

thought it was once per month (monthly). The employers indicated that line managers would provide ongoing supervision, but this would be dependent on the situation. As there was confusion amongst the practice educators about the level of supervision, the visitors were unable to establish whether the practice based learning environment was safe and supportive for both learners and service users.

Therefore, the education provider must clearly articulate to practice educators and learners the frequency of supervision and who carries out the supervision, whilst they are completing the practice-based learning element of the programme.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff for the practice-based element of the programme.

Reason: In a review of the documentation, the visitors understood that there were plans to recruit staff for the practice-based element of the programme. In discussions at the visit, the visitors learned that recruitment is currently ongoing. As the visitors were not provided with any information about who is delivering the practice based learning element of the programme or the process for ensuring that there is an adequate number of qualified and experienced staff in the practice-based setting, they were unable to determine whether this standard was met. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate what appropriate qualifications and experience practice-based learning staff must have and how they ensure that there is an adequate number of staff in the practice based setting who have the appropriately qualifications and experience to deliver the programme.

5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support learners on this programme.

Reason: This conditions relates to condition 5.5. In a review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that there are plans to recruit staff for the practice-based element of the programme, which are ongoing. As the visitors were not provided with the process for recruiting practice educators they were unable to establish whether practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate what process is used by the education provider to ensure practice educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.

6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must communicate clearly the specific requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Reason: In the SETs mapping document, the education provider referenced the generic university regulations used for all programmes which start in September. In discussions with the senior team and programme team, the visitors were told that specific university regulations would be drawn up for this programme as it falls outside the regular format due to it starting in January rather than September. As such, the visitors were unable to determine the assessment policies and the requirements for progression and achievement within the programme. The visitors were also unclear how learners progress through the programme if they have not met the pass criteria in any or all of the modules. Also the visitors could not see what actions would be taken by the education provider and the employer if a learner should fail the programme. Therefore, the visitors need to see how this is addressed in the assessment policies for the programme. As such, the education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how the programme-specific university regulations and assessment policies clearly specify the requirements for progression and achievement within the programme and how this information is made available to learners, academic staff and practice educators and providers.

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 30 January 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](#).