Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Anglia Ruskin University
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work (Chelmsford)
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	2 – 3 May 2013

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Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using title 'Social worker' in England must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 22 August 2013. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as the social work profession came onto the register in August 2012 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – BA (Hons) Social Work (Cambridge) full time, BA (Hons) Social Work (Peterborough) part time, MA Social Work (Chelmsford) full time and MA Social Work (Cambridge) full time. The education provider, the professional body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the professional body outline their decisions on the programmes status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Valerie Maehle (Physiotherapist) Dorothy Smith (Social Worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Louise Devlin
HCPC observer	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	70 (50 full time, 20 part time)
First approved intake	July 2003
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2013
Chair	Paul Jackson (Anglia Ruskin University)
Secretary	Libby Martin (Anglia Ruskin University)
Members of the joint panel	Laura Bright (Internal Panel Member) Vanessa Waller (Internal Panel Member) Ian Cummins (External Panel Member) Maxine Fletcher (External Panel Member) Nasreen Hammond (The College of Social Work) Jane Lindsay (The College of Social Work)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the ongoing approval of the programme is reconfirmed.

The visitors agreed that 51 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 6 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures 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 revisit the admissions information provided to clarify if international applicants can apply to the programme, and if so what the requirements are for international applicants.

Reason: From discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted that the programme is not open to international applicants. The visitors also noted, however, that the programme website suggests that there are specific requirements for international students, in that 'the [IELTs] requirement is 7.5'. If the education provider does not accept international applications, this information is contradictory. The visitors therefore require that the programme documentation, including advertising materials, is updated to clearly and consistently reflect the education provider's policies about international applications to the programme.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the admissions information to clarify the accreditation for prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) policy for the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that the education provider has information regarding their AP(E)L policy in the 'Senate Code of Practice on Admissions', which is a university-wide document. However, the visitors were unable to locate any clear detailed information regarding AP(E)L within the information provided to applicants to this programme. From discussion with the programme team, they clarified that there are currently very limited opportunities to transfer to the programme from other universities through AP(E)L, and that this may be why there is little information about it in the programme documentation. The visitors require that the information provided to applicants is revised to detail the programme's policies about AP(E)L. This will allow applicants to make an informed decision when applying to the programme.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that all documentation relating to the programme is updated so that it is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for Social Workers in England, and of the terminology that is used throughout the wider sector.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted references to the 'Health and social care professions council' (programme specification, page 6) and the 'Health and professionals care council' (student handbook, page 6) rather than the 'Health and care professions council' (HCPC). The visitors therefore require that the information provided to students is updated to reflect the current terminology in use relating to the HCPC. Additionally, following the merger of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), CRB checks are now called DBS checks. Therefore the visitors

require that all references to CRB checks within the admissions and programme documentation are updated to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, and to avoid any potential confusion for applicants and students. From a review of the programme documentation the visitors also noted that some documents were in draft form, for example Module Definition Forms (MDFs) were provided with a module amendment form. The visitors therefore require that, if any amendments are made to the documentation, the finalised versions are provided, to ensure that the resources to support student learning are effectively used.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The programme team must provide further information about how their relationship with Essex County Council ensures that there is a sufficient range of placement opportunities for students.

Reason: From discussions with the practice placement educators and the programme team during the visit, the visitors were made aware of the close working relationship between the programme team and Essex County Council, for the organisation of placements for students in local authority (LA) settings. This relationship is maintained through regular meetings to determine the number of LA placements available, the learning needs of the students, and the allocation of students to LA placement providers and educators. The visitors noted, in conversation with the practice placement providers and educators that the partnership takes a significant role in allocating students to available placements based on student preferences that have been expressed in application forms for placement. As such the visitors are unclear how the team ensures that the range of practice learning which each student undertakes effectively supports the delivery of the learning outcomes. Therefore the visitors require further information about the relationship the programme team has with Essex County Council and how this works in practice to ensure that all students get the experiences they require on placement. In this way the visitors will be able to determine how the programme team ensures there is a sufficient number and range of placements to support students in the achievement of the required learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency for social workers.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how they ensure equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored within practice placements.

Reason: In the SETs mapping document, it was indicated that the education provider requests confirmation that an agency has an equality and diversity policy as part of the initial and ongoing audit of the placement. Whilst it can be seen that the education provider seeks placements with equality and diversity policies in place, the visitors could not see evidence of a process by which the education provider ensures that equality and diversity policies are implemented at the placement setting, and how they are monitored. Therefore the visitors require further information to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that equality and diversity policies in relation to students are implemented and monitored at the placement setting.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to clarify the requirements for student progression within the programme, in particular for the 'Assessed Readiness for Direct Practice' module.

Reason: During the meeting with the programme team, the addition of a zero credit 'Assessed Readiness for Direct Practice' module led to discussions regarding progression following completion of this module. It was not clear if students would be able to progress onto taught modules (as they have achieved the required credits to do so), and how this would work in practice, as they would not be able to go on placement without having passed this module. The visitors therefore require further evidence that clearly demonstrates how students progress from level 4 – 5 in this module. Additionally, the new module approval form states that 'in order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40%' (page 25, Document 2), but in discussion with the programme team it was stated that this would be a pass/fail module. The visitors require that this is clarified within the programme documentation so students understand the requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Recommendations

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing how students give their consent when participating as service users in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: The visitors were provided with the Course Learning Agreement form, which allows students to give their consent to participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching. The visitors were therefore satisfied that this standard has been met. However, the visitors suggest that the programme team considers reviewing the consent form and accompanying guidance so that examples of tasks that students will be giving their consent for are detailed. This will contribute to a greater understanding of the specific tasks that students are providing their consent for before they sign the declaration.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Recommendation: The education provider should inform the Health and care professions council (HCPC) of any future changes to the ways in which interprofessional learning is delivered.

Reason: From discussions with the students at the visit, it appeared that their understanding of interprofessional learning was that it happened whilst on placement, rather than as part of a taught module. From discussions with the programme team it was clarified that there is interprofessional learning within the 'Practice 1' module, through communication and partnership working with other health and care professionals. The visitors were therefore content that where there is interprofessional learning within the programme, the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group are being adequately addressed, and therefore that this standard is met. From discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted that the education provider was considering altering its policies around IPL. However, they would like to remind the education provider that if there are any changes to the ways in which interprofessional learning is delivered within the curriculum, this could impact on the way in which this standard is met, and in this case the HCPC should be informed of any changes to interprofessional learning through the major change process.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue to monitor the number of staff at the placement setting, to ensure that there continues to be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to support students, following the recent increase in student numbers.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that there are currently an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting, and therefore that this standard is met. However, from discussion with the practice placement team and the programme team, the visitors noted the challenges in regards to planning for the provision of practice placements with the recent increase in student

numbers. The visitors would therefore suggest that the education provider continue to monitor the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to ensure it continues to be sufficient to meet the needs of the students at the placement setting.

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

Recommendation: The programme team should keep the channels of communication with local private, voluntary and independent placement educators under review to ensure that the level of communication with them is comparable to those educators in local authority settings.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation provided, and in the meeting with the practice placement providers that there was effective collaboration with practice placement educators, mainly through the agreement in place with Essex County Council. Therefore the visitors were content that this standard has been met. However, in the meeting with the practice placement providers it was highlighted that there were some difficulties getting placement educators from the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector organisations involved in some of the regular partnership meetings. As such some PVI placement educators did not have as regular communication with the programme as those educators who worked in local authority or statutory settings. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team keeps their communication with the educators in the PVI sector under review to ensure that those educators are fully informed of the developments in the programme and of the opportunities available for them to get involved. In this way the programme team may be able to facilitate a greater number of placement opportunities for their students in the PVI sector.

Valerie Maehle
Dorothy Smith