hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Bradford College
Validating body / Awarding body	Teesside University
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	17 – 18 April 2013

Contents

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 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 programme was approved. 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 professional body considered their endorsement of the programme and the HCPC and the professional body formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Deborah Kouzarides (Social worker)
	Lel Meleyal (Social worker)
	Paul Bates (Paramedic)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Louise Devlin
HCPC observer	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	35
First approved intake	January 2005
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2013
Chair	Jeanette Logan (University of Manchester)
Secretary	Mandy Taylor (Bradford College)
	Diane Evans (Bradford College)
Members of the joint panel	Aiden Worsley (The College of Social Work)
	Helen Wenman (The College of Social Work)
	Kausur Iqbal (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 48 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 9 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 recommendation 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 the programme.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the admissions documentation and information for applicants to ensure that the terminology in use is accurate, consistent and reflective of the HCPC and the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted references to the 'Health and care professionals council' and the 'Health and care profession council' rather than the 'Health and Care Professions Council' in the PowerPoint presentation that is sent to students who have been invited to attend an interview. Incorrect references to the HCPC were also evident in the 'course overview' section on the education provider's website, in reference to the 'Health and care profession' council, and in the statement that the HCPC register student social workers. The powerpoint presentation also states that registration with the HCPC is required upon completion of the course. The HCPC does not register students and HCPC registration is only required if a graduate wishes to use the title 'social worker' in England. The visitors therefore require the information provided to applicants to be updated to reflect the current terminology in use relating to the HCPC and statutory regulation of the profession.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information regarding the policy that is in place in relation to health requirements for applicants and students, and the procedures that are in place if a health condition is declared.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit included a health questionnaire that is completed by all students taking part in placements with children or vulnerable adults. During the meeting with the senior team, it was also mentioned that students will be given additional support if they declare a health condition at the interview stage. However, from the documentation the visitors could not see evidence of an official policy regarding the health requirements that students would be required to meet, or information regarding any procedure that is followed if an applicant or student declares a health condition which may affect their participation on the programme. Therefore the visitors require additional evidence of the health requirements students and applicants are required to meet in order to complete the programme. The visitors also require evidence of the policies and procedures that are used to determine what, if any, adjustments can be made to aid students who have declared a health condition in the completion of the programme.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit provided little evidence of the arrangements that are in place to ensure the continued security of the programme for future cohorts. At the visit, the visitors requested and were provided with the 'Memorandum of Agreement' between the new validating body and the education provider. However, the visitors felt that while this clarified the arrangements between the validating body and the education provider it did not demonstrate how the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme fits into the college business plan and the plan of the validating body to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate the role of the new validating body in the regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Reason: From discussions with the senior team the visitors were informed that the new validating body will be involved in quality assuring the programme, and that a full quality cycle has been agreed between the new validator and the education provider. However, it was not clear from the documentation provided exactly how, and to what extent, the new validating body is going to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence explaining the new validator's role in the quality assurance of the programme to ensure that there are regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

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

Condition: The education provider will need to 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.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted references to the 'Health and care professionals council' in the module descriptors and programme specification. In the practice handbook (page 8) the visitors also noted a reference to the practice modules being 'derived from the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics [SCPEs]' rather than the standards of proficiency (SOPs). There were also references to the SCPEs when the SOPs should have been referenced in the module aims of the 'Professional Practice 1' module specification template, and in other module specifications. The visitors therefore require that the programme documentation is reviewed to ensure that the terminology when referencing the HCPC, and the HCPC's standards, is correct and consistent to ensure that the resources to support student learning are being effectively used.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of any changes to the programme documentation following validation of the programme by the new validating body.

Reason: In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors noted that the education provider has not yet gone through the validation process with the new validating body for the programme. The visitors recognise that it is possible that documentation that will be used to deliver the programme could change as a result of the validation event. The visitors therefore require evidence of any changes to the programme documentation following validation of the programme to ensure that the resources to support student learning in all settings are being effectively used.

6.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information regarding the role of the new validating body in the assessment process to ensure that all assessments are providing a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Reason: In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors noted that the education provider has not yet gone through the validation process with the new validating body for the programme. As such the documentation received prior to the visit did not outline the new validating body's assessment and quality assurance procedures, and therefore the visitors were unsure how the education provider complies with the assessment framework of the new validating body. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the validating body's assessment and quality assurance procedures and how the education provider will meet the requirements of these. In this way the visitors can determine how the education programme can meet this standard.

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information regarding the role of the new validating body as part of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are in place to ensure appropriate standards in assessment.

Reason: In discussion with the senior team it was stated that the education provider will chair their own exam boards and committees, and that the new validating body can attend as many or as few of these board meetings as they wish. However, the documentation provided did not detail the role of the new validating body in the monitoring and evaluation of assessments, therefore the visitors require further evidence of the validating bodies assessment and quality assurance procedures and how the education provider will meet the requirements of these. The visitors also require further evidence detailing how and where the new validating body are going to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation for the assessment of the programme. In this way the visitors can determine how the education programme can meet this standard.

6.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.

Condition: The education provider must provide additional evidence regarding the procedure for the right of appeal for students, clarifying the difference in the academic and professional appeals process and the role of the new validating body in the appeals process.

Reason: The visitors noted in the student handbook (page 15) that there was an opportunity for students to appeal if they feel that they have been disadvantaged through the assessment process. They also noted that copies of the procedure could be obtained through the School of Teaching, Health and Care Administration Office or via the Student Ombudsman Office of the new validating body. The visitors were given some information in the form of a 'Complaints and Feedback' document which advised that students could make an appeal, but did not provide evidence of the appeals procedure. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that a procedure for the right of appeal for students is clearly specified within the programme documentation. The visitors also require information to clarify the difference between the academic and professional appeals process, as these were highlighted as separate processes in discussion with the programme team.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to make it clear that external examiners appointed to the programme must be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register, unless alternative arrangements have previously been agreed with the HCPC.

Reason: From discussion with the programme team it was clarified that the new validating body will recruit external examiners for the programme, with the education provider having the opportunity to make recommendations prior to the appointment of external examiners. They also informed the visitors that the recruitment of external examiners for this programme is still under review. This standard requires assessment regulations of the programme to state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered, or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed. The visitors therefore require evidence of the relevant documentation where it clearly specifies the requirement for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendations

4.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider the requirement for a daily reflective journal for students whilst on placement.

Reason: In the documentation provided and in the meeting with students, the visitors were made aware that reflective practice is emphasised and that students are required to complete a daily reflective journal as part of their placement experience. The visitors were therefore content that this standard was met. However, they noted from the meeting with students that a number of students expressed the requirement of completing a daily reflective journal as onerous, and that if it seen as a burden it could possibly reduce the effectiveness of regular reflection. In particular some students emphasised that they often struggled to find things to reflect upon that differed each day. The visitors would therefore like to suggest that the requirement for a daily reflective journal is kept under review for future cohorts. In this way the programme team can ensure that the purpose of the reflective journal and its effectiveness is maintained.

Deborah Kouzarides
Lel Meleyal
Paul Bates