

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Buckinghamshire New University
Programme name	PG Dip Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	30 – 31 October 2013

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6
Recommendations.....	10

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. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the 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 13 February. 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. 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 validated the programme and the professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. 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 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 education provider and the professional body outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Beverley Blythe (Social worker) Vicki Lawson-Brown (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Louise Devlin
Proposed student numbers	12
Proposed start date of programme approval	February 2014
First approved intake	February 2014
Chair	John Boylan (Buckinghamshire New University)
Secretary	Marcus Wood (Buckinghamshire New University)
Members of the joint panel	Aidan Worsley (The College of Social Work (TCSW)) Helen Tipton (The College of Social Work (TCSW)) Dr Pat Mahon-Daly (Internal panel member) Ruth Gunstone (Internal panel member) Jo Finch (External panel member) Karen Matthews (External panel member) Will Hoskin (Student Engagement Officer)

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Developmental committee minutes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memorandums of understanding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty of Society & Health academic plan 2013-16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review External examiners' reports for the programme prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new. The visitors therefore reviewed external examiner reports for the BSc (Hons) Social Work and the MSc Social Work.

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators/mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC met with students from the MSc Social Work programme, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for 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 programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 47 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining ten SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for 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 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 ensure that applicants to the programme are informed of the financial implications of completing the programme outside of the fourteen month timeframe.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted that the programme will be completed over a fourteen month period, and that this period is fully bursary funded. However, it was not clear from the documentation if there were any financial implications for students who complete the programme outside of this timeframe. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors were informed that full information regarding the bursary is provided in the bursary contract. However, the visitors could not see how applicants to the programme would be able to gain an understanding of all costs associated with the programme, specifically any costs that the student would have to cover if the programme was completed outside of the fourteen month timeframe. The visitors therefore require that the admissions material is revised to include any financial implications of the programme, and therefore ensure that individuals are given the information they require to make an informed choice regarding whether to take up an offer of a place on a 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 in the context document provided prior to the visit, that a maximum of 60 per cent of academic credit can be transferred to the programme, not including the final placement (page 5). This is contradictory to the information provided in the student handbook, that "APEL arrangements do not apply to the 2 practice learning modules" (page 35). In discussion with the programme team, it was clarified that it is a university wide policy that 50 per cent of academic credit can be transferred to programmes at the education provider. The information provided in the programme documentation was therefore inconsistent, and not reflective of the accreditation for prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) policy of the programme. Whilst the visitors noted that the students for this programme have been selected, with no students of the cohort applying to have AP(E)L considered in their application, they recognised the importance of clarifying the AP(E)L policy specific to this programme for potential future cohorts, and ensuring that if future cohorts do apply to have AP(E)L considered, that they are informed that their prior learning is mapped to the learning outcomes of the programme, to ensure that the relevant standards of proficiency (SOPs) have been previously met. The visitors therefore require that the information provided to applicants is revised to detail the programme's policies about AP(E)L and that the programme team demonstrate that there is a process in place for assessing AP(E)L.

3.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and,

unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate the relevant experience of the programme leader, or of the support mechanisms in place within the programme team to ensure that the programme leader is adequately supported in their role.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted that the programme leader is not currently registered with the HCPC, but that an application for registration is currently in progress. Whilst information regarding the programme leaders' academic qualifications were provided, the visitors require further evidence to confirm that the programme leader is suitably experienced, or that there are appropriate support mechanisms in place within the programme team to support the programme leader in their role.

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 to clearly outline the support that will be available to students.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that students would receive at least 45 minutes of weekly supervision whilst on placement (Practice Curriculum document, page 42). The programme team clarified that this information was incorrect, and that students would receive at least 1.5 hours of supervision per week, and this would be split between the work-based supervisor and the practice educator. The practice curriculum document also referred to 'mentors' who would be available to students, however, students on the current programme were unfamiliar with the term 'mentor', and the documentation did not clearly articulate the role of mentors on the programme. The programme team clarified that this is a role that is specific to the new programme, and a mentor would be made available as a support mechanism for students who required additional support. The visitors therefore require that all documentation relating to the programme is reviewed to ensure that students on the programme are aware of the support they can expect, and that is available to them throughout the programme. In this way the visitors can be sure that the resources to support student learning are being effectively used.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the attendance requirements, for both the taught and practice elements of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the student handbook, the visitors noted the requirement for a minimum of 80 per cent attendance for students on the programme (page 39). In discussion with the programme team, they explained that whilst this is a minimum requirement, there is a process that would have been initiated prior to attendance falling to 80 per cent, involving communication with the student face to face and through a letter. The visitors could not see how students will be made aware of this process, and

when a concern would be triggered. Additionally, in discussion with the practice team, the visitors were informed that the expectation for attendance on placement is 100 per cent. The visitors could not see where this was communicated in the documentation, or the process that would be initiated if students fell below this attendance requirement. The visitors therefore require further evidence that any differences in expectations regarding attendance between the taught and practice elements of the programme is reflected in the programme documentation, and that the process regarding attendance is clearly communicated to students.

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how the guided independent study approach of learning on the programme is appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team at the visit, the visitors noted that 'guided independent study', an approach whereby "students are encouraged to reflect and draw on their own experiences and to view tutors as facilitators to their learning" (page 6, Programme specification) made up a large proportion of time on the programme. From a review of the timetable provided, it was not clear how this amount of guided independent study hours fits into the overall curriculum, or the content of the learning that takes place through this type of study. As such, it was not clear how this teaching approach contributes to meeting the learning outcomes of the programme, and therefore the visitors require further evidence that this approach is appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how they ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered with the HCPC, and how they will ensure that they remain appropriately registered.

Reason: From discussion with the practice placement team at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider is currently in the process of recruiting practice educators for the programme. The visitors were not provided with any information regarding the policy for the recruitment of practice educators, and therefore it was not clear if it is a requirement that they must be appropriately registered with the HCPC. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the policy for the recruitment of practice educators to demonstrate that this standard is met.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information regarding the assessment methods for the 'putting the law into practice' module, to ensure that they successfully measure the learning outcomes.

Reason: From a review of the module descriptor for the 'putting the law into practice' module the visitors noted that the learning outcomes for this module are assessed by a two hour written exam. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors were informed that this assessment has been recently discussed to assess its

appropriateness, following a lack of integration of discussion regarding ethics in student answers. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how this assessment method successfully measures learning outcome five of this module, that students must “demonstrate a critical understanding of the complex relationship between personal, organisational and professional ethical principles and how these may impact on the exercise of legal powers and duties in practice” to ensure that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to ensure that the requirements for student progression between modules are clearly stated, and what impact re-sits may have on their progression and achievement within the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted that some of the information presented regarding progression did not relate to this programme, for example the assessment regulations indicated “students who fail their referral work may be permitted to retake the failed module for capped marks during the next Level” (page 17, University policies and regulations). The ability to re-sit certain elements in the following academic year, as this is a 14 month programme, is not applicable. Additionally, the visitors could not see evidence of what would happen if a student were to finish their placement late, and the implications of this for any taught element of the programme. In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed that a student would have an opportunity to re-sit all modules of the programme, with the exception of ‘SW723 Developing Social Work Skills for Practice’. It was not clear from the documentation what the timeframes were for re-sitting these modules. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team ensure that students have an understanding of the requirements for student progression and achievement on the programme, to ensure that this standard can be met. They also require the documentation to be updated to reflect the processes for this programme.

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 provide evidence of where it is clearly articulated within the programme documentation that at least one of the 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 a review of the documentation the visitors could not see where the requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the Register was stated within the documentation. The visitors therefore require further evidence of where this is stated to ensure that this is a requirement of the programme.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider that the involvement of stakeholders in the marking and assessment of elements of the programme, is quality assured and moderated to ensure that there continues to be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in assessment.

Reason: The visitors noted from the programme documentation, and in discussion with the programme team that all assessments are effectively monitored and evaluated, and therefore that the standards in assessment are maintained. In discussion with the service user and carer group, the visitors noted that service users have a positive contribution to many aspects of the programme, and that they are beginning to contribute to some elements of marking students work. Whilst the visitors felt that this was a positive contribution to the programme, they would like to recommend that the programme team ensure that the involvement of stakeholders in the assessment of students is quality assured and moderated to ensure that the current appropriate standards in assessment are maintained.

Beverley Blythe
Vicki Lawson-Brown