hpc **health & care
professions
council**

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Canterbury Christ Church University
Programme name	Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only)
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	14 – 15 November 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. 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 13 February. 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 (in England) came onto the register on 1 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 an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not review the programmes at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes – BA (Hons) in Social Work and MA in Social Work. Separate reports exist for these programmes.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Dorothy Smith (Social worker) Gary Dicken (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	35 Full time / 10 Part time
First approved intake	July 2004
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2014
Chair	Richard Brown (Canterbury Christ Church University)
Secretary	Carole Whitehead (Canterbury Christ Church University) Lauren Smyth (Canterbury Christ Church University)
Members of the joint panel	Ian Felstead (Internal Panel Member)

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 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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining two 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 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 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

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence that assessment regulations clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.

Reason: The visitors were referred to information on the programme structure and route within the programme's revalidation document and student handbook as evidence for this SET. In discussion at the visit, it was confirmed that the education provider are able to give aegrotat awards. However, from the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors could therefore not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not lead to eligibility to apply to the Register as a social worker in England. The visitors therefore require further evidence as to where the policy for aegrotat awards in relation to professional registration is laid out, and how students are informed about this.

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 programme team must submit further evidence that there will be **a**t least one external examiner who will be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. This standard requires the programme's assessment regulations to clearly articulate the requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be appropriately registered with the HCPC. The visitors therefore require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the relevant documentation to ensure that this standard will be met.

Recommendations

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team look at the administrative support systems in relation to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) processing and placement provider communications.

Reason: In the meeting with students at the visit, the visitors were informed of some glitches and delays in the system for processing DBS applications for the programme. Some of the practice placement providers also highlighted some minor issues with some areas of placement administration (for example, confirmation of placement staff registration details or conflicts of interest in the allocation of placements) that they had experienced when working with the department. The visitors considered that delays or issues in these support systems may affect the students' placement experiences, and therefore recommend that the programme team ensure that this is kept under review to ensure that the programme's systems are appropriately supported.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the programme team keep under review the monitoring and evaluation systems for placements to ensure effective, collaborative and problem-solving relationships, between the programme team and the practice placement staff.

Reason: As stated in the recommendation against SET 3.2, the meeting with practice placement educators brought to light some issues that they had experienced when communicating with the department. The placement educators were not clear as to how the feedback they and students give following placements, was fed into reviews or action planning. However, some placement staff commented that they had experienced good collaboration and discussions with tutors, and that they had recently increased the regularity of more focussed meetings with the academic staff, in addition to the overarching forums for more general discussions about practice placements. The programme team outlined that a new system, Practice Education Management System (PEMS), will be introduced next September to enhance the communication, feedback and information sharing between all parties involved with placements. The visitors were assured that the collaboration with practice placement educators was meeting the standard at threshold level and will be enhanced by recent and prospective initiatives. However, the visitors recommend that the programme team monitor these communication and feedback systems to ensure they continue to be effective and build good relationships with these stakeholders.

Dorothy Smith
Gary Dicken