hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Coventry University
Programme name	BA (Hons) in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time Work based learning
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	13 – 14 March 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 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 4 July 2013. At the Committee meeting on 4 July 2013, 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 part of a joint event. The education provider validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programme – MA Social Work. 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. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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 programme status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Derek Adrian-Harris (Diagnostic and Therapeutic radiographer) Michael Branicki (Social worker) Deborah Kouzarides (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
HCPC observer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	50
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Chris Bland (Coventry University)
Secretary	Sally Sykes (Coventry University) Jon Briggs (Coventry University observing)
Members of the joint panel	Steve Smith (Internal Panel Member) Malcolm Carey (External Panel Member) Karen Jones (The College of Social Work) Ann Johnson (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 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 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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 did not make any 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

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must submit further information to demonstrate how service user involvement within the programme is managed effectively.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit included a Service User and Carer Handbook. Discussions at the visit indicated the service user and carer group work with another education provider in the area and undertake various activities for both education providers. The activities the group participates in for this programme include curriculum delivery, curriculum design and assessment of practice portfolios. In the future they are planning to partake in the admissions processes as well. The visitors considered that with such wide ranging involvement directly relating to students (teaching, assessment and admissions); the programme team needs to have specific guidelines for how service user and carer involvement is managed, how the group is used and how the groups work is monitored to be able to ensure transparency and quality and consistency in the work they provide. The visitors also considered that such guidelines in place would protect the rights and needs of this group whilst they undertake activity with the programme. The visitors require the education provider to submit further information to demonstrate how service user involvement within the programme is managed effectively.

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.

Condition: The education provider must provide require further evidence to supplement the SOPs mapping document and demonstrate how the programme fully ensures the integration of social work theory to practice within the programme.

Reason: The SOPs mapping document submitted prior to the visit directed the visitors to particular modules to demonstrate how the programme delivers the SOPs. The visitors were unable to determine from the information provided (SOPs mapping, module descriptors and programme handbook) how the programme appropriately ensures the integration of social work theory to practice through the programme. In particular they were unclear as to how the programme delivered and consolidated the students understanding of social work theory including methods of social work intervention. Through discussion with the programme team it was highlighted that the students understanding of the theory of social work and methods of social work intervention was introduced outside of the modules on the programme. These elements of learning and teaching were not included within in the standards of proficiency mapping, module descriptors or programme handbook for the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence to supplement the SOPs mapping document and demonstrate how the programme fully ensures the integration of social work theory to practice within the programme.

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 submit further information regarding the online and face to face delivery approaches of the programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated the programme has integrated online teaching and learning tools within delivery of the programme. Whilst during the visit the visitors were shown that Skype and Big Blue Button were used for tutorials, seminars and also for meetings with practice placement providers when needed, there was insufficient time to discuss this further. The visitors later considered that communication is central to the profession of social work; communication theories and methods underpin meaningful communication practices and therefore when communicating with students, appropriate consideration needs to be given to the levels of online communication and face to face contact. The visitors highlighted that additional support may be needed for students who constantly experience a high proportion of online communication instead of face to face contact for placement meetings, tutorials and seminars. The visitors require further information regarding the delivery of online teaching and learning and the face to face contact. Particularly this is to ensure the programme team does not place sole focus on one mean of communication over the other and so disadvantage students learning.

Derek Adrian-Harris
Michael Branicki
Deborah Kouzarides