

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	De Montfort University
<b>Programme name</b>	BA Honours in Social Work
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Social worker in England
<b>Date of visit</b>	3 - 4 March 2015

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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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 30 June 2015. At this 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 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 and validating body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

## Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Robert Goemans (Social worker in England) Sid Jeewa (Lay visitor) Deborah Kouzarides (Social worker in England)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	60 per cohort, once per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2015
Chair	Sophia Welton
Secretary	Amanda Thompson

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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"/>
Service users and carers	<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"/>

## Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval the visitors must be satisfied 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 the relevant 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 43 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 15 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. 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 can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally 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 admissions materials to ensure consistency and accuracy.

**Reason:** To evidence this standard, the visitors were directed to a number of resources available to applicants and staff including the open day presentation and the admissions handbook. When reviewing the documentation the visitors noticed an inconsistency in the information made available to staff regarding the required UCAS points for entry onto the programme. Specifically, the Admissions Handbook, page 5 states "...a minimum UCAS points threshold of 260 is required...". Further into the same document, page 7 states "...minimum 240 points from 2 A levels or equivalent...". The visitors noted that inconsistent information provided to staff who are assessing potential applicants for the programme could cause confusion and lead to inconsistencies in the decisions being made. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit all programme documentation to ensure consistency and accuracy to enable admissions staff to make an informed choice about whether to make an offer of a place on the programme.

In addition to this the visitors noted inconsistencies in the information made available to staff compared to the information available to students. Specifically in contrast to the above mentioned UCAS points described in the admissions handbook, the Open day presentation, slide 9 states "...300 UCAS Points AND Maths and English GCSEs at grade C or above...". The visitors consider this information could be misleading to potential applicants to the programme. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit all admissions documentation to ensure consistency and accuracy to enable students to make an informed choice about whether to take up the offer of a place on a programme.

### **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 update the programme web page to inform potential applicants of the alternative and accessible formats available for admissions information.

**Reason:** Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to the programme web page to evidence this standard. The visitors noted that the programme relied heavily on the university web site to deliver the required information to potential applicants as a first point of contact. The visitors agreed that the web page provided sufficient information for applicants to make an informed choice about whether to apply to the programme, however, the visitors were unable to locate where this information might be available in other formats. In particular it was noted that the web page may not be accessible to all applicants and there was no clear information to guide potential applicants on the availability of accessible formats for admissions information and how to request this. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit the programme web page

to include information on how potential applicants can request the information on the web page in alternative and accessible formats to enable them to make an informed choice on whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

### **2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the formal process in place to follow up any declarations made on an applicants Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied with the process in place to ensure that each applicant to the programme will undergo a criminal convictions check via a DBS, as stated in the admissions handbook. However, the visitors were unable to locate any information on the process to be followed should an applicant make a declaration on their DBS application, or should the DBS be returned with convictions. In a meeting with the programme team the visitors heard that any declarations would be considered on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the view of practice educators and if they would offer a placement to each individual and consideration of employment on the same basis. The visitors were satisfied with this process for vetting declarations made, however, were unable to see a formal process which states this. The visitors note that without seeing a formal document for applying this process to all DBS checks, they are unable to have confidence that the process will continue to be applied consistently throughout the lifetime of the programme. The visitors therefore require further documentation to state the formal process to be followed should an applicant declare a conviction upon completing a DBS check.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to show where health requirements are clearly set out to applicants and the formal process in place to consider these.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied with the process in place to ensure that each applicant to the programme will complete a mental health declaration, as stated in the admissions handbook. However, the visitors were unable to locate where this requirement was clearly communicated to potential applicants before deciding to visit the university. The visitors note that slide 12 of the open day presentation states "You must complete a health declaration form..." However, the visitors were unable to locate where applicants could find this information prior to attending an open day, or if they were unable to attend an open day. In addition to this, the visitors were unable to find any information on the process to be followed should an applicant disclose information when completing the mental health declaration. In a meeting with the programme team the visitors heard that any disclosures would be considered on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the support the programme can offer and reasonable adjustments that can be made for each applicant. The visitors were satisfied with this process for approaching declarations, however, were unable to see a formal process which states this. The visitors note that without seeing a formal document for applying this process to all mental health declarations, they are unable to have confidence that the process will continue to be applied consistently throughout the lifetime of the programme. The visitors therefore require further documentation to state the formal



process to be followed should an applicant make a disclosure on the mental health declaration.

## **2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further clarity and a clear process on the requirement for applicants to make a declaration regarding statutory involvement.

**Reason:** In the documentation made available prior to the visit, the visitors noted that there was a requirement for applicants to make a declaration regarding statutory involvement. Specifically the entry criteria in the Admissions Handbook, page 7 states "...Declaration : statutory involvement as a service user...". The visitors were unclear on the requirements for completing the aforementioned declaration. In a meeting with the programme team it was stated that the requirement was for applicants to declare any previous involvement with statutory services in any context. However, the visitors were still unclear on the specific requirement for an applicant when completing this declaration. Furthermore, the visitors were unable to see a formal process which states the process to be followed when assessing this declaration. The visitors note that without seeing a formal document for applying this process to all declarations, they are unable to have confidence that the process will continue to be applied consistently throughout the lifetime of the programme. The visitors therefore require further documentation to state the criteria for assessing statutory involvement declarations and the process to be followed should an applicant make a disclosure on the declaration.

## **2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the implementation and monitoring mechanisms in place for equality and diversity in the admissions process.

**Reason:** Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to a university wide equality and diversity policy to evidence this standard. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that the content of the policy was appropriate to ensure equality and diversity in the admissions process, there was no clear evidence to show how the policy is implemented and monitored. The visitors note that without seeing a formal process for the implementation and monitoring of this policy, they are unable to have confidence that the process will continue to be applied consistently throughout the lifetime of the programme. The visitors therefore require further documentation to state the formal implementation and monitoring processes in place to support the equality and diversity policy and ensure that it is consistently applied in the admissions process.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence of the regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place for service user and carer involvement on the programme.

**Reason:** In meetings with the programme team and service users and carers, the visitors heard that service users and carers are able to feed back into the programme and that feedback given in the past had been acted upon. The visitors also heard that students had provided feedback on service user and carer involvement on the programme. The visitors were satisfied that the programme, at times, monitored and evaluated the involvement of service users and carers on the programme. However, the instances seemed infrequent and had no clear structure. The visitors note that without seeing a clear structure for the monitoring and evaluation of service user and carer involvement in the programme they are unable to have confidence that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be continuously and consistently applied throughout the lifetime of the programme. The visitors therefore require documentation to state the formal process for monitoring and evaluation of service user and carer involvement in the programme and how this will be consistently applied to ensure that the programme's effectiveness is appropriately evaluated.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit programme documentation to ensure that all information is accurate and consistent.

**Reason:** Throughout the documentation the visitors noticed a number of inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the information made available to students. For example, the Student Handbook, page 1 states "By the end of the programme you will have achieved both an academic and a professional award which will enable you to register as qualified social workers". The visitors note that this statement suggests that on successful completion of the programme, students will automatically gain registration with the HCPC to practice as a social worker. This is incorrect as successful completion of the programme will make students eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC, subject to application.

The visitors also noted several references to the previous Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), now known as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). For example, "pages 4, 5, 6 and 8 of the Admissions Handbook and page 4 of the Student handbook all make reference to CRB checks. Slide 12 of the open day presentation also states "You must complete a health declaration form and enhanced DBS...". The visitors note that incorrect and inconsistent information could be misleading to students and therefore require the programme team to revisit the documentation to ensure that all information is accurate and effectively used to support student learning in all settings.

### **3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further information on the appropriate numbers of core texts in the library in line with the frequency of requirement for use.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that the External Examiners Report 2013-14, page 8 states "The students felt that the library did not contain a sufficient number of the key social work texts...". In a meeting with students it was also stated that students felt there were an inadequate number of core texts available for the programme. When discussing this with the programme team it was stated that core texts for the programme were stocked

on a ratio of 1 for every six to eight students on the programme. Whilst the HCPC does not stipulate the number of core texts in the library, the visitors note that there seem to be continuous and consistent concerns raised by students and external examiners regarding the number of core texts available. The visitors therefore require further evidence on the requirements of core texts throughout the programme and the frequency with which students are required to use them in relation to the current curriculum. The visitors also require evidence to show that the numbers of core texts in the library are appropriate to support the student numbers on the programme and the frequency at which the core texts will need to be accessed, and, that further texts are made available should this be required.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must show how students are informed of the right to abstain from role play and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users in practical sessions.

**Reason:** Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to a consent form which students were required to sign at the beginning of the programme. The visitors were therefore satisfied that there was a process in place for taking students consent before participating in role play activities. However, the visitors could not determine how students were aware of the right to abstain from role play, and, how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. In a meeting with the programme team it was stated that alternative arrangements would be made on a case by case basis for students who decline from acting as service users and carers in role play activities, however there is no formal process in place to support this. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of the formal protocols that are in place to support students who decline from participating in role play and the arrangements in place to ensure their learning needs are met in alternative ways.

### **3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide evidence of the formal processes in place to support service users and carers who are involved in the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors were directed to documentation evidencing the involvement of service users and carers on the programme and also met with a service user who told us of their involvement with the programme. The visitors were therefore satisfied that service users and carers were contributing to the programme. However, throughout the documentation, the visitors were unable to locate clear information on how service users and carers are prepared for their roles and how they are supported when they are involved with the programme. In particular the visitors heard that there is “no clear coordination” for the service user and carer group. The visitors therefore require the education provider to implement and document a clear strategy to support service users and carers when they are involved on the programme and appropriately prepare them for their roles.

#### **4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence on the opportunities made available to staff to enable them to stay current in their teaching.

**Reason:** In a meeting with the programme team, the visitors heard that staff opportunities for currency were made available through various platforms including; keeping up to date with the news, reading journals and involvement with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). Whilst the visitors recognise that the platforms mentioned will cover some areas relating to currency in social work practice, they consider the opportunities to be limited. The visitors were also unable to see any information on how staff training and interaction with current social work practice is monitored. Without a clear process in place to evidence the range of opportunities made available to staff to attend training which informs the currency of their teaching the visitors are unable to state, with confidence, the curriculum remains relevant to current practice. The visitors therefore require information on the opportunities made available to staff to enable them to engage in events and activities, relevant to current social work practice that will inform their teaching. In addition to evidence how this will be monitored to ensure staff continue to stay up to date with current practice.

#### **5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide clarity on the responsibility for ensuring a safe and supportive placement environment and the monitoring mechanisms in place to support this.

**Reason:** In a meeting with the programme team it was stated that the education provider, specifically the placement coordinator, takes responsibility for ensuring the placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment. However, in a meeting with practice placement educators, the visitors heard that this was the responsibility of placement providers. The visitors were therefore unable to clarify who has responsibility for ensuring the practice placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment. Further to this, the visitors were unable to locate any information on the formal processes in place to monitor this. The visitors note that without confirmation of the ownership of this process they are unable to state, with confidence, that the practice placement settings will provide a safe and supportive environment. Therefore the visitors require clarification on who has responsibility for ensuring that the practice placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment and the monitoring mechanisms associated with this.

#### **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 on how equality and diversity policies at the placement setting are clearly communicated to students and the monitoring mechanisms associated to this.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that students are required to fill in a check list on their first day of placement which ensures that particular policies and procedures have been introduced such as fire procedures and risk assessment policies. However, the list

stated in the Practice Placement Report, Induction list, page 20-21 does not contain any reference to the practice placement providers equality and diversity policies. The visitors were therefore unable to state, with confidence, that students would be introduced to each placements equality and diversity policy upon starting their placement. Furthermore, the visitors were unable to see how the education provider would monitor this. Therefore the visitors require updated information on how the education provider will ensure that students are introduced to equality and diversity policies at the practice placement setting and how this will be monitored.

**6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.**

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit programme documentation to ensure that information made available to students clearly states that the BA Honours in Social Work is the only programme that confers eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register.

**Reason:** To evidence this standard the visitors were directed to the Course Template, page 2 which states "...eligibility to join the HCPC register...". The visitors note that the statement highlighted does not state that upon graduation, successful students will be eligible to apply for registration. Further to this, the visitors could not confirm that students and potential applicants would have access to this particular document throughout the programme. The visitors were therefore unable to state, with confidence, that students would be made aware of the requirements for this programme to be the only programme that confers eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC on successful completion of the programme. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit programme documentation to make it explicitly clear tht this programme is the only programme that will confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register, and, where this information will be readily available and accessible to students.

**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 revisit programme documentation to clearly state if aegrotat awards are offered, and, that they do not confer eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.

**Reason:** In the mapping provided prior to the visit, the education provider evidenced this standard by stating that aegrotat awards are not available on this programme. However, in a meeting with the senior team it was stated that the education provider does offer aegrotat awards for this programme. The visitors were therefore unable to confirm if the programme did or did not offer aegrotat awards. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revisit programme documentation to ensure that information regarding aegrotat awards is current and accurate. Further to this, if aegrotat awards are available on the programme, the visitors require the education provider to clearly state that an aegrotat award will not provide eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.

## Recommendations

### **3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend that the education provider considers expanding the service user and carer group.

**Reason:** The visitors could see that service users and carers are involved with the programme across a number of areas. However the visitors noted that there seemed to be a heavy reliance on one or two representatives of the service user and carer group. The visitors were concerned that should the key service users and carers be unable to continue their work with the education provider, there would be a risk to the involvement of service users and carers on the programme. The visitors also noted that the service user and carer group had a limited representation of carers. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team considers expanding the service user and carer group to include a wider range of expertise and in greater numbers.

### **3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend that the education provider considers a more formalised method for the recruitment of service users and carers.

**Reason:** The visitors could see that service users and carers are involved with the programme and that there was an informal method for recruiting them. The visitors heard that there was no clear recruitment strategy for service user and carer involvement and felt that a recruitment strategy would strengthen the involvement of service users and carers on the programme. Furthermore the visitors felt that a clear recruitment strategy would reduce this risk of this standard falling below a threshold level. The visitors would therefore like to recommend that the education provider considers implementing a clear recruitment strategy for the involvement of service users and carers on the programme.

### **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.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the programme team considers a more formal partnership agreement with practice placement agencies.

**Reason:** Throughout documentation and whilst at the visit, the visitors saw and heard details of the number, duration and range of placements appropriate to the programme. The visitors were therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted that there was no formal agreement in place between the education provider and practice placement agencies. The visitors noted that, without a formal agreement, practice placement agencies have the ability to withdraw collaboration with the university at any given point, presenting a risk to the number of placements available to the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider considers developing a more formal partnership agreement with partner placement agencies to strengthen how they meet this standard.

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