HCPC approval process report

Education provider	De Montfort University
Name of programme(s)	MA Social Work, Full time
Approval visit date	09-10 May 2018
Case reference	CAS-12956-B0S8X8

Contents

Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards
We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

How we make our decisions
We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Diane Whitlock	Lay
Graham Noyce	Social worker
Kate Johnson	Social worker
Shaista Ahmad	HCPC executive

Other groups involved in the approval visit
There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Tracy Cruickshank	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	De Montfort University
Sophia Welton	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	De Montfort University

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MA Social Work
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Social worker in England
Proposed first intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 50
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01853

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

Section 4: Visitors' recommendation

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors recommend that there is sufficient

evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met, and that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 05 July 2018 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.

Recommendations
We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure that there is a strategy to ensure ongoing service user and carer involvement in the programme.

Reason: From discussions with the service users and carers, the visitors noted that service users had been involved in the development of the programme including aspects such as interviewing, teaching and module assessment. As this information was provided, the visitors were satisfied that this standard was met appropriately. However, from discussions with the service users and carers the visitors were informed there was no broader strategy in place to involve service users and carers. As such, the visitors recommend that this should be introduced across relevant programmes to ensure that service users and carers are continually involved in the development of the programme over the coming years.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure reading lists are reviewed for each module associated with adult social work content, particularly in human growth and development.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team and reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that sufficient resources were in place to support learning in all settings, which were appropriate to the delivery of the programme and accessible to all learners and educators. However, they noted that there was an emphasis in the reading lists on children and families social work. As such, the visitors recommend that the reading lists for each module are reviewed to ensure there is a balance of texts across the generic nature of the profession.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Recommendation: The education provider should ensure all module indicative content is reviewed to ensure that it covers the following standards of proficiency:

- 2.1 understand current legislation applicable to social work with adults, children, young people and families

- 2.6 be able to exercise authority as a social worker within the appropriate legal and ethical frameworks and boundaries.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team and reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that the learning outcomes meet the standards of proficiency for social workers in England. As this information was provided, the visitors were satisfied that this standard was met. However, they noted that there were SOPs which had been mapped to the learning outcomes but not referenced in the indicative content. For example, the module human growth and development is mapped to SOP 2.1 and 2.6 but not referenced in the indicative content. As such, the visitors recommend that all the modules be reviewed to ensure that the relevant SOP's are referenced in the module descriptors. This would make it easier for learners to see how the SOPs are linked in with the content of the module they are studying.

5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider increasing the number of shadowing days of practice-based learning for first year learners.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team and reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted practice based learning was integral to the programme. However, they noted that there were limited elements of practice-based learning embedded into the first year of the programme, which included one day of shadowing for learners. As such, the visitors recommend that the education provider considers increasing the days of shadowing in year one to ensure they accommodate the needs of all learners who may benefit from practical elements of the programme as well as ensuring learners are able to apply their theoretical knowledge to a practice based learning environment.