

Visitors' report

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| Name of education provider | Edge Hill University |
| Programme name | MA Social Work |
| Mode of delivery | Full time |
| Relevant part of the HCPC Register | Social worker in England |
| Date of visit | 16 – 17 June 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 27 August 2015. 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

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| Name and role of HCPC visitors | Jane McLenachan (Social worker in England) Anne Mackay (Social worker in England) Susanne Roff (Lay visitor) |
| HCPC executive officer (in attendance) | Alex Urquhart |
| Proposed student numbers | 10 per cohort, 1 cohort per year |
| Proposed start date of programme approval | 1 September 2015 |
| Chair | Tony Turjansky (Edge Hill University) |
| Secretary | Katherine Griffiths (Edge Hill University) |
| Members of the joint panel | Colin Watt (External Panel Member) Caroline Hickman (The College of Social Work) Sue Furness (The College of Social Work) Frances Scattergood (Internal Panel Member) Jacqui Basquill (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 | <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"/> |

The HCPC did not review the external examiners reports from the last two years prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

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"/> |

The HCPC met with students from the BA (Hons) 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 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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining three 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 recommendation 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 the admissions information provided to ensure that applicants to the programme are informed of the expectations of the admissions process, and in particular English language requirements.

Reason: From the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider ensures that applicants to the programme have all of the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the website was highlighted as the main way to provide detailed information about the programme and the admission process. However, upon reviewing the website the visitors could not determine where applicants were informed about the English language requirement for this programme. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants and therefore, require the education provider to review the website, to ensure potential applicants are informed of the English language requirements for this programme. In this way the visitors can determine how the programme can meet this standard by ensuring that applicants have all the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme.

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 the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. Discussion indicated aegrotat awards would only be awarded in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. The visitors could not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards would not enable them to be eligible to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding the aegrotat award.

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 include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were assured that the external examiner would be the same as the currently approved BA (Hons) Social Work programme. The visitors were also presented with the curriculum vitae for the proposed external examiner and were therefore satisfied with the current arrangement. However, in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy. It was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the Register. In discussion with the programme team it was indicated the programme team would take account of this standard when updating programme documents. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors need to see evidence of the HCPC requirements regarding external examiners within the programme documentation.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider how they communicate the attendance policy and monitoring process to students on the programme.

Reason: In meeting this standard the visitors were directed to the programme handbook where the attendance requirement and the monitoring processes are detailed. From this information, the visitors were satisfied that there was a system in place to monitor attendance, and that the standard has been met. However during the meeting with the students it was noted that some of the students were unaware that attendance requirement was 100 per cent. As such, the visitors recommend that the education provider consider how best to communicate the attendance policy and monitoring process to the students on the programme to ensure all students are aware of the required attendance policy and the associated monitoring mechanisms.

Susanne Roff
Anne Mackay
Jane McLenachan