![hcpc health & care professions council]

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Goldsmiths, University of London
Name of programme	Post-Graduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up to Social Work) - Full time accelerated
Approval visit date	1 – 2 June 2017
Case reference	CAS-11791-K8Y3J0

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:

Luke Tibbits	Social worker in England
Nicholas Drey	Lay
Sheila Skelton	Social worker in England
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Post-Graduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up to Social Work)
Mode of study	FTA (Full time accelerated)
Profession	Social worker in England
Proposed first intake	1 January 2018
Maximum student cohort	18
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01685

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
Student handbook	Yes
Practice placement handbook	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Not Required

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

Group	Met
Students	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Placement providers and educators	Yes
Service users and carers	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Tour of facilities	Yes

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
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 was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that 53 of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 31 August 2017.

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 to clarify the entry requirements for the programme.

Reason: The visitors were able to review documentation related to the application and entry processes for the programme, and to discuss them with the programme staff and senior team at the visit. They were informed that the application process was administered jointly by the education provider and partners in the South East London Teaching Partnership (SELTP), as well as the Department for Education (DfE). However, from their reading of the information provided to applicants the visitors were not able to determine how it was made clear that the education provider funded a criminal records check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). As such they were unclear how the information will give all of the applicants the information they need to make an informed decision about taking up a place on the programme. They therefore require the education provider to demonstrate how the documents produced for applicants by the education provider state this information. In this way they can determine how this standard will be met.

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 demonstrate how they ensure that service users and carers involved in the admissions process are trained to follow relevant equality and diversity policies.

Reason: The visitors were able to review documentation relating to service user and carer involvement in admissions, and to discuss such involvement with service users and carers. The representatives of service users and carers stated that they had been

closely involved in admissions, for example in interviews, and that their views on applicant suitability had sometimes been decisive in whether or not an applicant was accepted. The visitors were satisfied that service users and carers had received some training to undertake this role. However, the visitors also noted that in undertaking this role the service users and carers would have certain responsibilities to ensure that they acted within the equality and diversity policies of the education provider. From the evidence provided the visitors were not able to see evidence that the service users and carers had received specific training in how equality and diversity policies related to their involvement in admissions. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing how they ensure that service users and carers involved in admissions understand what impact the relevant equality and diversity policies have on their role in interviewing applicants to the programme.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the commitment that has been made to ensure the programme has a secure place in the education providers' business plan.

Reason: The visitors were able to discuss with the senior management team how the programme was situated within the strategic plans of the education provider. They received verbal reassurances that the programme had strong institutional support, as social work was a key component of their overall provision, and that there was close ongoing co-operation with other key stakeholders, the South East London Teaching Partnership (SELTP) and the Department for Education (DfE). The visitors were able to see a draft copy of an unsigned memorandum of understanding between the education provider and the three London boroughs involved in the SELTP. However they were not able to see written evidence of a final agreement reflecting the commitment of the stakeholders to the programme. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence of a commitment to the programme from all key stakeholders.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Reason: The visitors were able to review staff CVs and discuss arrangements for staffing the programme with the senior team. They noted that the education provider had recruited a new member of staff to lead the programme, and that there was a plan to recruit two further members of staff. In addition to this, it was intended that existing staff from the BA and MA Social Work would take some responsibilities on the new programme. However, the visitors were not able to determine how teaching responsibilities on the new programme would be arranged and how the time of existing staff members would be re-allocated to support this programme. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence to show how they will ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver this programme effectively.

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.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that attendance requirements on the programme are clear to students.

Reason: The visitors were able to review the parts of the programme documentation that concerned attendance requirements, and discuss with students on the existing BA and MA programmes their understanding of the requirements. The visitors noted that different figures were given for the attendance requirement in different documents, for example the student handbook stated 100% and the programme specification 90%. As such they were unclear when the programme team would take action in cases of non-attendance. In discussion, the students did not seem sure of the attendance requirement. The visitors were therefore unable to determine how the education provider had clearly identified where attendance was mandatory, and when the programme team would take action about non-attendance. Therefore they require that the education provider submit evidence showing how they will identify to students where attendance is mandatory and what the implications of non-attendance will be.

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.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing how they ensure that students have a full understanding of consent.

Reason: The visitors were able to discuss with students on existing social work programmes their experience of giving consent for involvement in role plays. The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met, as students had to sign a consent form at the start of the programmes and there seemed to be an understanding among the students that they were not obliged to do things that might make them feel uncomfortable. However, several of the students could not recall having seen or signed the consent form, although they must have done so. The visitors therefore suggest that on the new programme the education provider reflect on how they might increase students' awareness of the formal consent process. In this way they may be better able to increase students' awareness of the consent process and their right not to participate, along with the implications for doing so.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Recommendation: The education provider should review their approach to how students on placements use service users' anonymised personal information for academic purposes.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team and students, the visitors were aware that students sometimes used anonymised information about service users with whom they had worked on placement in their academic work. They considered that the rigorous anonymisation of data meant that the standard was met at threshold. However the visitors recommend that the education provider keeps under review how they ensure that service users in contact with students understand that those students might be writing about their experiences and situations. Any review should ensure that service users and carers are always aware that they are giving their active and informed consent for their experiences to be used for educational purposes. In this way it may enhance service users' and carers' awareness that their data may be used in this way and enhance student's interactions with them to obtain their consent to use this information.

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Nicholas Drey
Luke Tibbits
Sheila Skelton

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