hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Heart of Worcestershire College
Validating body / Awarding body	Birmingham City University
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	11 – 12 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 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 part of a joint event. The validating body reviewed the programme. The validating body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the validating body. 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 validating body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Sid Jeewa (Lay visitor) Teri Rogers (Social worker in England) Dorothy Smith (Social worker in England)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Byrom
Proposed student numbers	30 per cohort, one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Philip Thickett (Birmingham City University)
Secretary	Faye Bond (Birmingham City University)
Members of the joint panel	Andrea Collins (External panel member) Heather Coughlin (External panel member) Barbara Neale (External panel member) Alan Robson (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	☒	☐	☐
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	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC reviewed external examiners' reports from the last two years for the BA (Hons) Social Work validated by University of Worcester, as external examiners' reports have not yet been produced for the programme seeking approval.

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	☒	☐	☐
Service users and carers	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with students from the BA (Hons) Social Work validated by University of Worcester, 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 56 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining two 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

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the documentation supporting the programme to ensure it is consistent, clear and up-to-date.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the programme documentation prior to the visit, and noted various inconsistencies or inaccuracies. For example, discussions at the visit confirmed that there would be no compensatable modules on the programme, however module descriptors were inconsistent in reflecting these requirements. There were also instances of inconsistent titling of module SWSS3003, and the visitors highlighted that many of the references to editions of core texts on reading lists within the module descriptors required updating. The module descriptor for SWSS3009 Practice – Achieving Capability states the mode of delivery as 80 days attendance in placement, whereas it was confirmed through other documentation and discussions with the programme team that this should be 100 days. In the Practice Learning Handbook Year 3 (page 8) it also incorrectly states that the amount of placement days specified is a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) requirement. There were other inaccurate references to the HCPC within the programme resources, for example, "The Health and Social Care Professions Council" (on the programme webpage's Assessment section). The visitors noted that these inconsistencies could be misleading or ineffective in supporting students. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit documentation to ensure it is an effective resource in supporting student learning.

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 clarify the attendance requirements for the programme, including the minimum level which would trigger formal procedures, and what those procedures will entail.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the Course Guide (page 49) as evidence for this programme. They noted the attendance requirement is 100 per cent for both academic and practice modules. This section of the Couse Guide also highlights the reporting procedures for absences. It states: "Where attendance requirements and sickness notification have not been met, attendance will be the subject of formal enquiry by the Personal Tutor and could result in the student failing the module on the grounds of not having met attendance requirements." However, the visitors could not find an explicit statement in the documentation as to what the minimum level that is acceptable was for the programme, and what situation would trigger formal procedures. The programme team indicated in discussions that the minimum level was 80 per cent. They also outlined the process of tutor contact following absence and alternative learning assignments, followed by formal procedures where necessary. In discussion with the students, the visitors heard confirmation that any absences were followed up with contact from the programme staff. However, though the expectation of full attendance was made clear, students were unsure as to the minimum level of attendance that would trigger formal procedures, or what the process would be. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how students are informed of the minimum level of acceptance for attendance, and the follow-up procedures that are in place.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider is advised to formalise the feedback mechanisms for external contributions to the programme, including from service users and carers.

Reason: The visitors noted that there are regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place for the programme's management and teaching and learning activities, and were therefore satisfied that this standard is met. The visitors also noted the approach to working with external speakers as outlined in the flowchart on page 221 of the Additional Evidence booklet, which states that there is 'Evaluation of session', which is then shared with the speakers. These sessions are delivered in partnership with the programme team to ensure quality and the delivery of required learning outcomes. In the meeting with service users and carers at the visit, the visitors heard that the feedback and debriefing following contributions from service users and carers was largely through informal routes from the programme team. In further discussions at the visit, the programme team outlined how they evaluate these contributions with the individuals. Again, it was noted that the monitoring is undertaken as part of wider formal systems such as module evaluations and annual monitoring, and limited directed formal feedback mechanisms are in place for each session. The visitors encourage the education provider to put more formal mechanisms in place for this area of evaluation to ensure that the significant contributions to delivery from external contributors, including practitioners and service users and carers, continue to be effectively evaluated in future.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Recommendation: The education provider are advised to further formalise the agreements in place with placement providers to ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning annual reports and minutes of Practice Learning Forum meetings as evidence for this standard. The visitors also reviewed the other documents in place to support the arrangement and management of placements for the programme. In discussions with practice placement providers at the visit, the visitors heard of the regular mechanisms in place with the programme team for assuring the quality of practice placement educators who supervise students on the programme. The visitors also noted that the education provider delivers joint briefing sessions for students and practice placement educators, to disseminate information about the documentation and requirements specific for this programme. From this evidence, the visitors were satisfied that the education provider has adequate measures in place to ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. The visitors also noted that the practice placement providers manage the records of the practice placement educators' qualifications and registration, and share this with the education provider. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider work to internalise the monitoring processes or further formalise associated agreements that are in place with practice

placement providers, to ensure that the practice placement educators continue to have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience for taking students on the programme.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Recommendation: The education provider are advised to further formalise the agreements in place with placement providers to ensure that placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning annual reports and the Practice Learning Opportunity Profile form as evidence for this standard. The visitors also reviewed the other documents in place to support the arrangement and management of placements for the programme. In discussions with practice placement providers at the visit, the visitors heard of the regular mechanisms in place with the programme team for assuring the quality of practice placement educators who supervise students on the programme. The visitors also noted that the education provider delivers joint briefing sessions for students and practice placement educators, to disseminate information about the documentation and requirements specific for this programme. From this evidence, the visitors were satisfied that the education provider has adequate measures in place to ensure that practice placement educators undertake appropriate training. The visitors also noted that the practice placement providers manage the records of the practice placement educators' qualifications and training, and share this with the education provider. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider work to internalise the monitoring processes or further formalise associated agreements that are in place with practice placement providers, to ensure that the practice placement educators continue to undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Recommendation: The education provider are advised to further formalise the agreements in place with placement providers to ensure that placement educators are appropriately registered.

Reason: The visitors were directed to the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning annual reports and the Practice Learning Opportunity Profile form as evidence for this standard. The visitors also reviewed the other documents in place to support the arrangement and management of placements for the programme. In discussions with practice placement providers at the visit, the visitors heard of the regular mechanisms in place with the programme team for assuring the quality of practice placement educators who supervise students on the programme. The visitors also noted that the education provider delivers joint briefing sessions for students and practice placement educators, to disseminate information about the documentation and requirements specific for this programme. From this evidence, the visitors were satisfied that the education provider has adequate measures in place to ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered. The visitors also noted that the practice placement providers manage the records of the practice placement educators' registration, and share this with the education provider. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider work to internalise the monitoring processes or further formalise associated agreements that are in place with practice placement providers, to ensure that the

practice placement educators continue to be effectively assured as appropriately registered.

Sid Jeewa
Teri Rogers
Dorothy Smith