hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Liverpool Hope University
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	7 – 8 March 2013

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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. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 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 4 July 2013. At the Committee meeting on 4 July 2013, 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 (in England) came onto the register on 1 August 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 education provider reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - BA (Hons) Social Work and MA in Social Work. 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the professional body outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Derek Adrian-Harris (Radiographer) Graeme Currie (Social worker) Christine Stogdon (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Samantha Herelle
Proposed student numbers	25 (Inclusive of Masters in Social work)
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Bart McGettrick (Liverpool Hope University)
Secretary	Jane Blackmore (Liverpool Hope University)
Members of the joint panel	Atulya Nagar (Internal Panel Member) Daniel Jeyaraj (Internal Panel Member) Jane Watkins (Internal Panel Member) Peter Beresford (External Panel Member) Ann Davis (External Panel Member) Jim Greer (The College of Social Work) Amanda Hatton (The College of Social Work)

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	☒	☐	☐

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

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval the visitors must be assured 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 their 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 52 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 5 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. 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 did not make any recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set 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 review the programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation submitted by the education provider contained incorrect terminology, the additional documents for HCPC validation document 3 BA Social Work and MA Social Work states 'Successful completion leads to the university award of MA Social Work and eligibility for entry to the GSCC Register of Social Work', in document 4 for BA and MA in Social Work, it includes that 'The programme is accredited by the General Social Care Council and leads to qualified social worker status'. The Social work profession (in England) came onto HCPC Register on 1 August 2012 after the GSCC was closed; therefore any reference to the GSCC is incorrect and could be misleading for students and potential applicants. The visitors noted other instances of incorrect terminology used and references to the previous regulatory body (GSCC) throughout the documentation submitted. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for applicants and students.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the admissions and programme documentation to clearly articulate the information potential applicants and students require to support their learning in all settings.

Reason: The programme documentation submitted prior to the visit did not clearly state attendance requirements for the academic setting and the practice placement setting. The visitors also noted that that information about the equality and diversity policy was not clearly articulated in the student handbook. Discussions with the students indicated they knew the procedures to follow when absences were necessary and polices about equality and diversity in place within the education provider. During discussions with the programme team it was revealed there was an expected attendance of 100% for all components of the programme with allowances made for reasonable absences and students were made aware of the different policies in place. From the evidence received the visitors were not satisfied that equality and diversity policies and information about attendance requirements were fully communicated to the students. The visitors also noted that if students were not aware of the threshold requirement, it would be difficult for the education provider to monitor and step in to take action to ensure absence does not affect students' learning and development. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation including the student handbook to be revised to communicate the equality and diversity policy and the minimum attendance requirements for the academic setting and the practice placement setting to students.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the formal protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users in practical sessions.

Reason: The visitors noted through discussions with the students and the programme team that verbal consent had been sought for participation as a service user in practical simulation and role play activities. But there were no formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students before they participated as a service user in practical and clinical teaching. The visitors considered that without consent protocols in place it would be hard to mitigate any risk involved in students participating as service users. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about participating within the programme, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, or how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students (such as a consent form to be signed prior to commencing the programme or annually) and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit included detail about 'structured themes' in the curriculum, with several of the SOPs listed as being covered in each structured theme. During discussions with the programme team it was revealed that the education provider is moving towards this holistic approach by introducing the structured themes and so integrating their curriculum. There was also a mapping document which showed the SOPs mapped against module titles. The education provider did not provide any further detailed mapping to show how the programme's learning outcomes mapped onto specific teaching and learning opportunities to demonstrate how all the SOPs were met. However the visitors were not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that graduates of the programme would meet all of the SOPs for the profession, and therefore require further evidence demonstrating how the learning outcomes ensure that students who complete the programme meet the SOPs for social workers in England to ensure that this standard is met.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensure that students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

Reason: In line with their concerns against SET 4.1, the visitors noted that the mapping documentation provided prior to the visit did not detail how students who successfully completed the programme demonstrate that they meet all of the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for the profession. The visitors therefore require further evidence demonstrating the programme's assessment strategy and design ensures that all students who complete the programme meet all of the SOPs for social workers in England to ensure that this standard is met.

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Christine Stogdon
Graeme Currie
Derek Adrian-Harris

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