Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Liverpool John Moores University
Programme name	BA (Hons) in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	14 – 15 May 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 22 August 2013. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. 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 validated the programme and the professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - MA in Social Work and Postgraduate Diploma Social Work (Step up to 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	Martin Benwell (Diagnostic radiographer) David Childs (Social worker) Vicki Lawson-Brown (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	20
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Tony Hall (Liverpool John Moores University)
Secretary	Jagori Banerjee (Liverpool John Moores University)
Members of the joint panel	Rebecca Bartlett (Internal Panel Member) Debbie Ford (External Panel Member) Gary Hickman (The College of Social Work) Ann Johnson (The College of Social Work) Ruth Sawyers (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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 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 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 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

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the curriculum ensures students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Reason: The documentation provided for the visit indicated the modules where the curriculum would ensure students are introduced to the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and where the programme team would ensure they understand the implications of the standards. The modules are new modules so the module materials were not available at the time of the validation event, the internal processes will have them created after the validation event. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to submit evidence to demonstrate how the curriculum ensures that students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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 the assessment strategy and design will ensure the student who successfully completes the programme will meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the programme adheres to education provider regulations concerning assessment. Modules with two components of the overall assessment require both to be passed to pass the module. Due to the assessment regulations (C7), a student may be able to pass one component and fail one component, however due to compensation regulations be able to achieve a pass overall in the module. Discussion highlighted this could lead to concerns surrounding whether or not the students are achieving the learning outcomes for that module. The visitors considered this may impact on how the student can meet the standards of proficiency upon completing the programme. In light of this discussion the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider will manage this situation and ensure students who successfully complete the programme will meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider ensure the information provided through the admissions procedures is consistent and current.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit highlighted information was provided to potential applicants and applicants to the programme through different ways. The visitors were satisfied applicants to the programme had the information they require to make an informed decision about the programme. The visitors noted the information provided in the prospectus for the programme included details about the costs of the enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) which was not included in the online materials. The visitors also noted the open days for the programmes provided additional information the online materials and prospectus did not. The visitors recommend the programme team review the information presented in different ways through the admissions procedures to ensure the information is consistent and current.

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 visitors recommend the education provider carefully monitor student attendance.

Reason: The education provider has further developed the attendance policy and is in the process of rolling it out across all programmes and all levels. The programme documentation defines the mandatory attendance requirements for the academic and practice placement settings. The visitors were satisfied this standard is met. The students identified attendance at lectures varied which was having a noticeable impact on their learning. The students indicated they had discussed this with the module leaders however in some modules, attendance stayed low. The visitors recommend the programme team carefully monitor attendance to ensure they know when to take necessary action if attendance levels across the cohort appears to be low.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider continue to work with practice educators to ensure they are familiar with the new placement paperwork

associated with the standards of proficiency (SOPs) and the professional capabilities framework (PCF).

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the programme team was in the process of visiting practice placement providers to introduce them to the new placement paperwork which uses the SOPs and the PCF. The visitors noted the programme team had carried out initial work discussing the new paperwork with the practice educators and would follow this up with further meetings once the programme had started. The visitors feel this is an appropriate way to manage the introduction of the paperwork and recommend the programme team continue with this to develop the practice educators understanding of the documentation and the assessment of the PCF and SOPs.

Martin Benwell
David Childs
Vicki Lawson-Brown