Visitors' report

Name of education provider	London Metropolitan University
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker, in England
Date of visit	24 – 25 June 2014

Contents

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 4 December 2014. At the Committee meeting on 4 December 2014, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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 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 as the professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Social Work- full time and MSc Social Work - full time. 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 the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Beverley Blythe (Social worker) Teresa Rogers (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
HCPC observer	Anna van der Gaag
Proposed student numbers	45 once per year
First approved intake	September 2014
Chair	Richard Skues (London Metropolitan University)
Secretary	Laura Daugherty (London Metropolitan University)
Members of the joint panel	Helen Wenman (The College of Social Work) June Saad (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 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 44 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 13 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 ensure potential applicants of the programme are given a complete range of information in order to make an informed choice about the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided and discussions at the visit included information about the admissions policies for the programme. Open days were highlighted as the main way to provide detailed information about the programme and the application process. However, the visitors were aware that not all applicants of the programme would be able to attend open days and would require all the information to be accessible to those who could not attend. The visitors received PowerPoint presentation slides that are given to Social work applicants as evidence to meet this standard. During discussions with the programme team the visitors highlighted the importance of providing full information about the programme so applicants are able to make informed decisions. This included information about:

- the application process requirements;
- the enhanced disclosure and barring service fee;
- the interview day, the written tests and group work to be completed; and
- all costs associated with travel, particularly in regards to placement.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the above information is communicated to potential applicants, to ensure that they are able to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

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 revise the advertising materials for the programme to clarify that the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work is an exit route for the MA Social Work programme.

Reason: Discussions at the visit with the senior team revealed that students would be able to exit from the MA Social Work programme with the Postgraduate (PG) Diploma in Social Work. As this is a recent development within the planning of the programme, information regarding the PG Diploma exit route was not detailed in the admission documentation that the visitors reviewed prior to the visit. The visitors therefore require evidence that information regarding the PG Diploma as an exit award is communicated to potential applicants of the programme, and that the differences between the MA and the PG Diploma programmes are communicated. This will ensure that applicants have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a programme.

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Condition: The programme team must provide further clarity on the selection and entry criteria that will be used in relation to applicants' command of English, and how this will be assessed in applications.

Reason: Discussions with the programme team highlighted that the admission entry test is the main way the programme team ensures that entrants are able to communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written English. However the visitors were unclear what criteria would be used to measure this. It was also not clear if, or what, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level was required for entry to the programme for applicants whose first language is not English. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit programme documentation to clearly state what measures will be used to ensure that the English language requirements needed for entry to the programme are met.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the admissions information to clarify the accreditation for prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) policy for the programme.

Reason: Generic evidence was provided to the visitors regarding the AP(E)L process**.** 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 make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. The generic information that is provided to applicants did not include the specific information about this programme. The visitors noted in the supporting document page 47, that it is possible to apply to enter stages of the programme and be admitted through an accreditation procedure; however, there is no clear detailed information about this scheme. Discussions with the programme team revealed some confusion as to whether students are able to engage in the AP(E)L process. The visitors were unclear as to how the programme applied the generic AP(E)L policy and how potential applicants were made aware of what constitutes as criteria for AP(E)L. The visitors were also unable determine how the programme team actively monitor the AP(E)L process against the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs). Therefore, the programme team need to clarify whether students are able to employ the AP(E)L scheme to get onto the programme. As well as revising the admission and programme documentation to explain the process in place. This will allow applicants to make an informed decision when applying to the programme.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must submit further information to demonstrate how Hourly Paid Lecturers (HPL) involvement within the programme is managed effectively.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team and senior team, the visitors noted that Hourly Paid Lecturers (HPL) are integral to the delivery of the taught curriculum as well as providing a vital role to students as a personal tutor and practice tutor. The visitors were confident that

the HPL identified have the appropriate knowledge and experience to strengthen the delivery of the programme in the context of current practice. However, the visitors were unsure of the mechanisms in place to manage HPL and who held responsibility to ensure that HPL are prepared, supported and communicated to effectively. As such, the visitors require the education provider to submit further information to demonstrate how HPL involvement within the programme is managed effectively.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the resources to support student learning throughout the programme are clear and consistently reflective of the current setting for registration of social workers.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included several instances of incorrect terminology and information. For example, section three of the BSc (Hons) handbook states, 'students who do not complete their placement within a year are not eligible to apply for registration with HCPC as a Social Worker'. The HCPC does not have prescriptive requirements for the length of time that placements must be completed in. Also, the supporting evidence document page 125 states 'All students must be supervised by qualified practice teacher (HCPC)'. We do not set any requirements on who is able to supervise students whilst on placement. Our requirements around placements are for the education provider to demonstrate that the practice learning effectively supports the delivery of the learning outcomes. It is important that students are equipped with accurate information, and the visitors considered it to be important the programme documentation accurately reflects the HCPC and HCPC's role in the regulation of the profession. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to correct all instances of inconsistent and incorrect terminology, to ensure that students are not unintentionally misinformed either about the HCPC or the current landscape of regulation. In this way the visitors can determine how the resources to support student learning are being effectively used.

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 identify where on the programme students' attendance is mandatory and how the attendance mechanisms are effectively communicated and monitored.

Reason: The visitors noted that, in the documentation provided, there was no explicit reference to where and when attendance is mandatory for students on the programme. In discussion with the students it was highlighted that there is an attendance policy and that students are aware of when attendance is mandatory. The visitors also discussed the attendance policy with the programme team who highlighted that the university wide attendance policy applied to this programme**.** However, the visitors were unsure how students starting the programme would be informed of the attendance policy, how it would be enforced and what, if any, repercussions there may be for students who fail to attend. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the attendance policy, what parts of the programme are mandatory and how this is communicated to students. They also require further evidence to demonstrate how students were made aware of what

effect contravening this policy may have on their ability to progress through the programme.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the planning and allocation of placements ensures that students will have access to a range of placements that are appropriate to support the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted the diagram on page 283(Supporting evidence document) indicated a reduction of nearly 25 per cent in placement availability. Discussions with the programme team and placement providers, confirmed that a number of placement providers no longer provided London Metropolitan University with placements. The programme team spoke of how they have taken steps to maximise placements and developed a hybrid model approach to placements. However, the visitors were unclear, with these steps, how the education provider ensures students undertake a sufficient range of practice placements.
In addition to this, the visitors noted that many of the current available placements were child related, with limited placements available that focused on adult services. From the current list of placement providers the visitors were unsure how the education provider planned and allocated placements to students to ensure they have access to a wide range of learning experiences in a variety of practice environments that reflect the generic nature of this programme. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme will ensure that the range of placements will be appropriate to support the students' achievement of the learning outcomes.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate they maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated the education provider uses the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) audit tool. It was highlighted by the education provider that the placement coordinator is supported to approve and monitor placements. The visitors considered the auditing system currently in place to work well in its role however they could not see evidence of what the programme team does with the information collated through QAPL. Additionally, the visitors could not identify that the education provider has systems in place to deal with any issues that may be raised through QAPL the process. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating how they maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of how they ensure all practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit included the procedures for approving and monitoring practice placement providers. The visitors reviewed this information but were unable to determine from this how the education provider ensures that practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place in relation to students. Discussions with the programme team indicated that there is a process in place to ensure practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place, but the visitors were unsure what these processes were. In order to determine how the programme continues to meet this standard the visitors require the education provider to provide evidence to demonstrate how they ensure practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place.

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 assessments of learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England**.**

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included module booklets and module specifications together with a mapping document giving information about how the curriculum is mapped against the SOPs. The mapping document did not provide information of the assessment of the SOPs, the document made broad references, rather than specific references. Therefore, visitors were unsure of the assessment that takes place to ensure that the SOPs are met, as well as how the assessment of each module's learning outcomes linked to each of the SOPs, to ensure that a student completing the programme meets the SOPs for social workers in England. From discussions with the programme team the visitors heard that the assessment of learning outcomes linked to SOPs, however, from the documentation provided the visitors were unable to determine how SOPs for social workers in England are embedded and assessed within the curriculum of the programme. Therefore, the visitors were not satisfied that this standard was met. The visitors require further documentation to clearly evidence how the assessment of learning outcomes ensures that each student meets the SOPs on successful completion of the programme. The visitors have suggested that the education provider submits further documentation that clearly defines the link between the assessment of module learning outcomes and SOPs in order to meet this condition.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment methods will measure all learning outcomes.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included module booklets, module specifications and standards of proficiency mapping document. However, the documentation submitted for this standard did not clearly specify the assessment methods. The visitors noted that without clarity of the assessment methods used for each module, they could not determine if the chosen methods are in line with the learning outcomes of each module. For this reason, the visitors were unable to determine how this SET will be met**.** The visitors therefore, require the programme team to clearly state which assessment methods will be employed and how the chosen

assessment methods are in line with the learning outcomes of each module. This way the visitors can be sure that the assessment methods employed will appropriately measure all the learning outcomes to ensure that those students who successfully complete the programme can practice safely and effectively.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not lead to registration with the HCPC.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. This SET requires the programme documentation to clearly state that an aegrotat award will not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. The visitors could not determine from the documentation 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 the programme documentation to be updated to clearly specify that an aegrotat award would not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. This is to provide clarity for students and to ensure that this standard is met.

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: 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 HCPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner for the programme. However, the visitors need to see evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that this standard is met.

Recommendations

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team continue to develop and strengthen the relationships between themselves and the placement providers**.**

Reason: Discussions at the visit indicated that the programme team has been working to strengthen the relationships between placement providers and themselves. Therefore, the visitors are satisfied this standard is being met. From discussions with the placement providers it was clear they appreciated the developing links to the programme, would welcome further collaboration and were keen to input further into the programme design and delivery. The visitors were pleased to hear this and wish to encourage the programme team to continue with this development.

Teresa Rogers
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