Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Manchester Metropolitan University
Programme name	MA Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	1 – 2 May 2013

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. 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. 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 accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – BA (Hons) Social Work – Full time, MA Social Work (Employment based) – Work Based Learning, and PG Dip Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only) – Full time. 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	David Childs (Social Worker)
	David Ward (Social Worker)
	Laura Golding (Clinical psychologist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
HCPC observer	Ben Potter
Proposed student numbers	48
Chair	Elizabeth Price (Manchester Metropolitan University)
Secretary	Emma Wingate (Manchester Metropolitan University)
Members of the joint panel	Susan White (External panel member)
	Sarah Ives (Internal Panel Member)
	Kathryn Heathcote (Internal Panel Member)
	Robert Johns (The College of Social Work)
	Helen Tipton (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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 4 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

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure the programme documentation accurately reflects the current landscape of regulation for social workers in England.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included several instances of incorrect and out of date terminology. There are references to the previous regulator, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) throughout the documentation. For example page 9 of the Course Development Plan the education provider states that 'all programmes are approved by the GSCC'. The GSCC no longer exists and therefore references to this body should be reviewed to ensure the documentation accurately reflects the current landscape of regulation. There are also incorrect statements about the HCPC's requirements for practice learning. For example, page 36 of the Programme Specification states 'TCSW & HCPC require all students to undertake 200 days of practice learning'. The HCPC does not have prescriptive requirements in terms of practice days. The HCPC's requirements around placements are for the education provider to demonstrate that the practice learning effectively supports the delivery of the learning outcomes. Also, the visitors noted that throughout the Programme Specification it is stated that upon completion of the programme students 'will be eligible to register with HCPC as a qualified social worker'. Students are eligible to apply for registration but this does not necessarily mean that they will be registered, as the HCPC performs a health and character test at the point of registration. Also, page 1 of the programme specification states that the programme is 'accredited' by the HCPC, rather than it is 'approved' by the HCPC, which is the correct terminology. 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 landscaper of regulation. In this way the visitors determine how the resources to support student learning are being effectively used.

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the formal procedure for with dealing with concerns about students' profession related conduct and how this works in tandem with the education provider's fitness to practice procedure.

Reason: In discussions at the visit and from the documentation, the visitors were made aware that there are processes in place which deal with concerns about students' profession-related conduct. For example, the suitability procedures for the suspension and exclusion of students from the programme on the grounds of professional unsuitability. However, the visitors were unable to determine a clear, definitive, formal procedure for dealing with issues around student professional conduct to ensure that issues of this kind are dealt with clearly and consistently. They were also unclear how this process links into the established fitness to practice procedure. As a result the visitors could not determine what criteria are used to determine when an issue around

students' profession related conduct is referred to the fitness to practice procedure and how this is communicated to students, staff and placement educators to ensure consistency. Therefore the visitors require clear evidence of the formal procedure in place to deal with issues around students' profession-related conduct and how this procedure connects to the fitness to practice processes in determining if students can continue on the programme. This evidence should also highlight explicit information for students and placement educators around this process so that visitors can determine how this standard is being met.

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 outcome.

Condition: The programme team must provide further clarification on the formal processes they will use to allocate placements and ensure that all students get the experience they require to meet the relevant standards of proficiency (SOPs).

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors were provided with a SOPs mapping document for the programme which linked the relevant learning outcomes associated with practice placements to relevant standards of proficiency. However, in discussion with the students it was highlighted that there are issues with finding appropriate statutory placements in the local area and that some students had two distinct placements with similar groups of service users. It was also highlighted in the meeting with the programme team that the outcome of each of the placements is negotiated between the student and the placement providers at the first placement meeting. As a result of the evidence provided the visitors could not determine how the programme team used the allocation of placements to provide students with sufficient placement experience to meet the stated learning outcomes and subsequently the SOPs. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the scheme of placements will work in practice to be sure that the range of practice placements are appropriate to support students in achieving the required learning outcomes and meet the relevant standards of proficiency for social workers.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence to articulate what the team consider to be appropriate training and to demonstrate how they ensure practice placement educators have undertaken this training so they can supervise and assess students appropriately.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, as well as discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider offers free training and refresher training for practice placement educators. They similarly noted that practice placement educators needed to achieve stage 1 and stage 2 of the 'practice educator professional standards' before supervising students on various placements. However, the visitors were unclear about what programme specific training practice placement educators would be required to undertake before they could supervise and assess a student's performance based on the requirements of this programme. The visitors were also unclear how the programme team monitors the training that practice placement educators have undertaken prior to supervising a student. The visitors were therefore unclear about how the programme team ensures that all practice placement educators have

undertaken the required training activities so that they can undertake the role that is being asked of them. In particular the visitors were unclear how practice placement educators were being trained to implement the new assessment of students in regards to the SOPs and the professional capabilities framework (PCF). The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence of the training that practice placement educators are required to undertake before they supervise a student on this programme. They also require further information of the programme specific training that is offered to practice placement educators to ensure they can assess students in line with the new assessment requirements around the SOPs and PCF. In this way the visitors can determine how the programme may meet this standard.

Recommendations

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider including team members' relevant professional experience on their curriculum vitae.

Reason: From discussions at the visit, the visitors saw sufficient evidence that the programme team has appropriate staff with the relevant expertise and knowledge to deliver an effective programme, and therefore were content that this standard has been met. However, the visitors would like to encourage the programme team to include their professional or direct practice experience on their curriculum vitaes. In this way the programme team may be better able to demonstrate how they keep the curriculum current and bring relevant, recent experience to bear on the teaching activities of the programme.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should inform HCPC once they have moved to the new campus through the HCPC major change process.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the on-site facilities at the Didsbury campus were effectively supporting students through the programme. As such they were content that this standard has been met. However, the visitors where informed at the visit that the education provider intends to move the social work department to a new campus in the near future. The visitors were presented with brochures of the new campus as well as a presentation of the new resources that will be available at the campus. The visitors want to remind the education provider that they would need to notify HCPC through the major change once they move to the new campus of education and health as this may affect how the programme continues to meet this standard. In this way the HCPC can ensure that resources continue to be effectively used to support students in all settings and that this standard continues to be met.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Recommendation: The education provider must inform HCPC if interprofessional learning is introduced to the curriculum once the education provider has moved campus.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied that this standard is being met as the programme team articulated that currently there was no explicit interprofessional learning with other professional groups. However, the visitors where informed at the visit that the education provider intends to move the social work department to a new campus which would be shared with a number of programmes from different professions. From the brochures of the new campus as well as a presentation, the visitors were made aware that, while there will be an increase in the quality of resources, these would be shared with other professional programmes. The visitors want to remind the education provider that they would need to notify the HCPC of any changes to interprofessional learning on the programme through the major change process once they move to the new campus.

This is to ensure that, if any interprofessional learning is introduced by the education provider as a result of this move, this learning adequately addresses the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group.

David Childs
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Laura Golding