hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Nottingham Trent University
Programme name	MA Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time Work based learning
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	22 – 23 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 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 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 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 professional body also considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – BA (Hons) Social Work, full time and work based learning and PG Dip Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only) full time and work based learning. 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 professional body outline their decisions on the programmes status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Lel Meleyal (Social worker)
	Graeme Currie (Social worker)
	George Delafield (Practitioner psychologist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Louise Devlin
Proposed student numbers	5
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2014
Chair	Judith Ward (Nottingham Trent University)
Secretary	Elizabeth Twells (Nottingham Trent University)
	Rosemary Taylor (Nottingham Trent University)
Members of the joint panel	Rachel Hek (The College of Social Work)
	Reshma Patel (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)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with students from the BA (Hons) Social Work programme, 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 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 50 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 7 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 will need to ensure that all documentation relating to the programme is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for Social Workers in England, and of the terminology that is used throughout the wider sector.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors noted that most references to the Health and care professions council (HCPC) were correct. However, there were a few instances where the HCPC was referred to as the Health and care professionals council, for example in the MA contextual document (p3) and handbook (p49) and there were also references to HCPC validation of the programme. The HCPC approve programmes within the UK for the professions we regulate, rather than validate programmes of study, therefore the visitors require that the programme documentation is updated to reflect this. Additionally, the education provider needs to ensure that references to the 'Criminal Records Bureau' (CRB) (p9, BA handbook) are updated to the 'Disclosure and Barring Service' (DBS) regarding requirements for criminal convictions checks. This will ensure that all documentation relating to the programme is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for Social Workers in England, and that the terminology used in relation to criminal convictions checks is accurate.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide finalised versions of any documentation that has changed following revisions from the initial documentation reviewed by the visitors, prior to the visit.

Reason: From discussion with the programme team at the visit, the visitors learned that the programme documentation had recently undergone significant revisions. Unfortunately due to limited time available at the visit, the visitors were unable to review the revised documentation fully to ensure that the resources to support student learning in all settings continue to be effectively used. The visitors were also made aware that the programme had recently gone through an internal validation event, and understand that changes to the programme documentation may be required following this event. The visitors therefore require that any documentation that has changed from the original documentation that they reviewed prior to the visit, and as a result of the internal validation event is provided to ensure that resources to support student learning in all settings will be effectively used.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide a finalised version of the 'Social Work Students as Service User in Role Play' policy, and demonstrate how this will be made readily available to students.

Reason: At the visit, the visitors were provided with a copy of a recently drafted policy regarding student participation in role plays where they would be acting as service users. This policy includes students ability to opt out of acting as service users in role

plays, and states that every participant must give their informed consent before participating. At the visit, the programme team explained that currently students would be asked to volunteer when acting as service users rather than nominated to do so, however they felt that incorporating this policy into the curriculum would formalise students ability to provide their consent when acting as service users. The visitors were informed that the policy was currently in draft form, and further amendments may be made to it. Therefore the visitors require that they see the finalised version of the 'Social Work Students as Service User in Role Play' policy, and information regarding where within the programme documentation it would be made readily available to students.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the processes in place to ensure that all practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support students whilst on placement.

Reason: In the 'HEI placement audit report' (October 2012) provided prior to the visit, the visitors learned that 51.4% of the practice educators or supervisors in place did not have a social work qualification. In the meeting with the programme team, it was clarified that there are procedures in place for training practice placement educators, however the visitors could not see from the documentation the processes that are in place to ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support students. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to ensure that this standard is met.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence regarding the current practice placement educators that are in place, including their registration status and, where they are not registered, details of their qualifications and experience.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, in particular the 'HEI placement audit report' provided prior to the visit, the visitors learned that 51.4% of the practice educators or supervisors in place did not have a social work qualification, as of October 2012 when the report was produced. From discussions with the programme team it was not clear what the criteria for becoming a placement educator was, and the steps taken to check their appropriateness for the role of a practice placement educator. To be assured that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to provide further documentary information about the processes in place for checking the the registration status of current placement educators and, where they are not registered, the processes in place to check the qualifications and experience of practice placement educators, which make them suitable to undertake this role.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of where it is clearly stated within the assessment regulations of the programme that only programmes that are approved by the HCPC lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors felt that whilst there was some information regarding exit awards within the programme documentation, it needed to be clarified that any programmes or exit awards that are not approved by the HCPC do not lead to eligibility to apply for registration. At the visit, the visitors were provided with a revised BA contextual document in which the wording concerning exit awards had changed to state that "students who leave the social work degree must complete their studies on related courses in order to be eligible to register with the HCPC" (p22). This is incorrect, and therefore the visitors require evidence that the documentation has been updated to clearly state that only programmes that are approved by the HCPC lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of where it clearly specifies that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Reason: From a review of the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors could not see evidence of where it clearly states that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence of where within the programme documentation this is stated, to ensure that this standard can be 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 revisit the programme documentation to make it clear within the assessment regulations that at least one of the external examiners appointed to the programme must be HCPC registered unless alternative arrangements have previously been agreed with the HCPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. This standard requires that the assessment regulations of the programme states that at least one of the external examiners appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed. Therefore the visitors require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiners to the programme have been included in the relevant documentation to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

Recommendations

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should keep the staff numbers within the programme team under review to ensure that there continues to be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation provided, and in the meeting with the programme team that there was an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme for the proposed student numbers for the next cohort of the BA (35 students) and for the new MA programme (5 students). Therefore the visitors were content that this standard has been met. However at the visit, the senior management team expressed a view to potentially increase the student numbers for the MA programme in future years. Additionally, in the meeting with the programme team they discussed the challenges of running out the current BA part time programme, whilst introducing a new BA work based learning programme, and MA programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team keeps the staff numbers within the programme team under review to ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme. The visitors would also like to remind the education provider that if there are any changes to the number of students or teaching staff, that the HCPC is informed through the major change process to ensure 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 should inform the Health and care professions council (HCPC) of any future changes to the ways in which interprofessional learning is delivered.

Reason: From discussion with the senior team, the visitors were informed that there is not currently interprofessional learning in place on the programme, and as this is not a requirement of the HCPC, this standard continues to be met. However, the senior team discussed plans for incorporating interprofessional learning into the curriculum for future cohorts. In the meeting with the students, they also discussed the possibility of working with trainee barristers in mock court appearances in the future that had been communicated to them by the programme team. The visitors therefore recommend that any incorporation of interprofessional learning into the curriculum is submitted to the HCPC via the major change process, to ensure that the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group is being adequately addressed.

5.12 Learning, teaching and supervision must encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.

Recommendation: The programme team should keep the teaching of safe practice under review to ensure that students are fully aware of safety precautions they can take whilst on placement to further encourage safe and effective practice.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation provided and in the meeting with the practice placement providers that learning, teaching and supervision encourages safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct and therefore that this standard continues to be met. However, in discussion with the service user group, the visitors noted concern amongst some members of the group, that some students seemed unaware of what they felt were basic safety precautions to take when they go on placement. One service user mentioned recent discussion with a member of the programme team around how the service user experience could be utilised to enhance student's awareness of safe practice whilst on placement. The visitors therefore recommend that how students are taught about safe practice in preparation for placement is kept under review to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

Lel Meleyal
Graeme Currie
George Delafield