

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Royal Holloway, University of London
Programme name	MSc in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	8 – 9 May 2014

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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. 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 2 July 2014. 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 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 an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate the programmes at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes: Graduate Diploma in Social Work and PG Dip in Social Work (Master Exit Route Only) - both full time. Separate reports exist for these programmes.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Kim Bown (Social worker) Gary Dicken (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	67 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Derrick Chong (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Secretary	Louise O'Connor (Royal Holloway, University of London)

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 five 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 recommendation 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

2.6 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: The visitors noted that the education provider has information regarding their AP(E)L policy which they referred to as 'credit transfer' in their generic college wide policy. However, the visitors were unable to locate any information regarding AP(E)L within the information provided to applicants to this programme. Discussion with the programme team clarified the policy was not regularly used. The programme team spoke of the support they provided applicants through this 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 therefore require the education provider to revise the admissions and programme documentation to explain the process in place.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for social workers, and contains accurate information about the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included several instances of incorrect terminology associated with the HCPC. For example, the website makes reference to the previous regulator, the General Social Care Council (GSCC). The HCPC holds regulatory responsibility for social workers in England. References to the GSCC are incorrect as they no longer exist. Also, the visitors noted the programme specification (page eight) states that the programme is "accredited" by HCPC, rather than it is 'approved' by HCPC, which is the correct terminology. The visitors consider incorrect and inaccurate statements may mislead students and provide an incorrect impression of the HCPC as the statutory regulator. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation and ensure the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation, and avoids any potential confusion for students.

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 education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate what awards confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register and those exit awards which do not.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that anyone successfully completing this programme would be eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC. It was also clear that anyone who received an exit award would not be eligible to apply to the HCPC Register. However, these discussions were

not clear in the documentation. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team ensure that students understand which awards confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register and which do not

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 that the assessment regulations clearly specify the requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The SETs mapping document (SET 6.9) clearly stated “condonement is not allowable for the professional qualification”. Discussion with the senior team indicated aegrotat awards would only be awarded in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. However there was no mention in the documentation that an aegrotat award does not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the documentation regarding the aegrotat award policy.

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 continues to be met

Recommendation

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

Recommendation: The programme should consider revising the 'consent form' given to student at the point of admission, to clearly articulate that they may be expected to participate as a service user in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: Documentation submitted and discussion at the visit indicated the programme uses a range of teaching methods including role play based scenarios and sharing of personal information. Discussions with the students indicated that they were aware of the implications of consenting to participate. They outlined that if a student declined to participate then this would be discussed with the personal tutor or the module leader and if needed additional measures would be put in place to ensure there is no detrimental effect to learning. The visitors were satisfied with this and suggest that further clarification can be provided in the consent form to clearly articulate to students they may be expected to participate as a service user in a practical and clinical teaching.

Kim Bown
Gary Dicken