

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	University of Bath
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Social Work and Applied Social Studies
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Social worker in England
<b>Date of visit</b>	12 – 13 May 2015

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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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 27 August 2015. 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 the Social work profession came onto the register in 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 professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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 the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

## Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Teresa Rogers (Social worker in England) Paula Sobiechowska (Social worker in England) Kathleen Taylor (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	42 per cohort, one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Adrian Vatcher (University of the West of England)
Secretary	Alison Borgelin (University of Bath)
Members of the joint panel	Vijay Patel (The College of Social Work) Gary Hickman (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	<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"/>
Service users and carers	<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 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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining three 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 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 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

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit key programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

**Reason:** The documentation submitted by the education provider contained instances of incorrect terminology. For example, the prospectus (Volume E, page 8) and website states, “You undertake a total of 170 days assessed practice plus 30 skill days, as required by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).” This statement refers to the requirements of the professional body, The College of Social Work. HCPC do not prescribe specific requirements regarding placement duration or skills days; education providers must meet the HCPC standards of education and training. The programme specification states: “The University of Bath is currently approved to deliver degrees in social work by the profession’s registering body the Health and Care Professionals (sic) Council (HCPC).” The Health and Care Professions Council approves programmes, rather than education providers, in its role as regulating body. The visitors also noted references to the previous regulator’s requirements, such as the “Code of Conduct and Ethics (HCPC)” (Placement Handbook, page 7) and the “National Occupational Standards for Social Work (NOSSW)” (Volume F, page 25). Incorrect and inconsistent statements have the potential to mislead applicants and students. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflects the language associated with statutory regulation.

### **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 evidence how they implement appropriate protocols to obtain consent where students participate in practical teaching, such as roleplays.

**Reason:** The visitors noted from the evidence provided that there is a statement in each of the module handbooks acknowledging that students will be asked to engage in roleplays and discussions. The module handbooks also outline that students may opt out of the activity, and would be given ‘a replacement task of equal proportion’. However, the visitors could not find evidence of formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students before they participated as a service user in practical roleplays. The visitors considered that without formal consent protocols in place it would be hard to mitigate any risk involved where students participate as service users. The visitors also could not determine how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, or how situations where students consistently declined from participation across modules were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students (such as a consent form to be signed prior to commencing the programme or annually) and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical teaching or role play.

**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 explicitly identify the attendance requirements for the programme, and clearly outline the monitoring mechanisms and follow-up actions.

**Reason:** The standards of education and training (SETs) mapping document referred the visitors to statements within the programme and placement handbooks as evidence for this SET. The Programme Handbook (page 11) outlines that students are expected to attend learning and teaching activities according to University of Bath Regulations. It highlights that, "Failure to maintain regular attendance can result in a student being 'precluded from continuing their studies and, where applicable, their registration [can] be terminated'". In discussion with the students, the visitors heard that further to the University of Bath Regulations, attendance is seen as a professional indicator on the programme, registers are taken, and that any absence is followed up by the module leader with alternative learning arrangements. Discussion with the programme team confirmed these arrangements, outlining that they implement attendance expectations at programme level, though the University of Bath does not require or enforce compulsory attendance. The visitors could not find an explicit statement in the documentation as to what the attendance requirement for this programme is, or the minimum level that is acceptable. Whilst the visitors noted that the practice placement handbook (page 12) states the requirement that "All students must complete 170 days of practice..." The visitors could not see how students were informed of the programme's expectations for university based elements of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how students are informed of the monitoring and follow-up procedures that are in place at programme level regarding non-attendance to taught elements of the programme.

## Recommendations

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

**Recommendation:** The programme team are advised to revisit admissions information to ensure the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) opportunities available for applicants and the relevance to this programme is more easily accessible.

**Reason:** The visitors were satisfied that the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about the programme, and that AP(E)L is available to potential applicants. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard how the education provider would handle applications and were confident that the processes were in place to ensure appropriate admissions. However, the visitors found this difficult to find in the admissions documentation and therefore considered that prospective applicants may also have difficulty in locating the relevant information. In addition, the students in attendance at the visit did not appear aware of the AP(E)L process available at the education provider and its relevance for them in applying to the BSc (Hons) Social Work and Applied Social Studies programme, and the programme team indicated they could not recall receiving applications for AP(E)L. Therefore the visitors advise that the education provider revisits the admissions documentation to make this process clearer to prospective applicants.

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

**Recommendation:** The programme team are advised to ensure that the feedback gathered on placements is effectively used to inform and develop practice placement learning.

**Reason:** In discussions with practice placement providers and educators at the visit, the visitors heard the various forums for feedback and communication between the programme team and practice placement educators. From the evidence gathered at the visit, and the documentation, the visitors were assured that the systems in place for approval and ongoing monitoring of placements and practice placement educators was meeting this SET at threshold level. The visitors noted that students and practice placement educators evaluate the placement experience through the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning forms. The Student Placement Feedback QAPL Form, (Placement Handbook, page 62) outlines how the feedback will be used to inform processes and states that it is 'hoped' that the evaluation will be shared with practice placement educators. However, in discussions, the practice placement educators were not clear as to how the feedback students give following placements was fed back to them, or fed into reviews or action planning. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team monitor the communication channels around these feedback systems to ensure they continue to be as effective as possible in collaborating effectively with practice placement staff and monitoring the quality of placements.

### **6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.**



**Recommendation:** The programme team are advised to pursue the implementation of anonymous marking as soon as possible, to ensure objectivity in the measurement of student performance.

**Reason:** The visitors noted comments from the external examiner in the 2012 – 2013 and 2013 – 2014 reports (Volume D, pages 30 and 86), regarding the practice of non-anonymous marking of assessments at the University of Bath. The visitors discussed the assessment and moderation policies in place at the education provider with the programme team at the visit, and were informed that anonymous marking was due to be rolled out from September 2015. The visitors were satisfied that the education provider's planned actions will meet this SET once implemented. However, the visitors recommend the programme team take any necessary pre-emptive steps at department level to ensure anonymous marking is implemented wherever reasonable, and as soon as possible for the programme, in order to ensure objectivity in the measurement of student performance.

Teresa Rogers  
Paula Sobiechowska  
Kathleen Taylor