

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Bedfordshire
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	20 – 21 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' 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 26 August 2014. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. 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. The education provider reviewed the programme and the professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the MSc Social Work, Full time programme. 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. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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	Ruth Baker (Clinical psychologist) Dorothy Smith (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Louise Devlin
Proposed student numbers	35 per cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
First approved intake	July 2004
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	August 2014
Chair	Paul Beedie (University of Bedfordshire)
Secretary	Gina Indge (University of Bedfordshire)
Members of the joint panel	Michael Faherty (Internal Panel Member) Tim Gregory (Internal Panel Member) Barbra Teater (External Panel Member) Phil Slater (External Panel Member) Jane Heyes (The College of Social Work) Ann Johnson (The College of Social Work) Jo Cleary (Observer - 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"/>
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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 2 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

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the named exit awards for the programme, and how these are clearly communicated to students.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors could not see any named awards that students could exit the programme with, if they failed to successfully complete certain elements of the programme. In discussion with the programme team, they clarified that there would be awards that students would be able to exit the programme with, but these were not currently named in the programme documentation. This standard requires that documentation relating to the programme clearly specifies requirements for student progression and achievement. The visitors therefore require further evidence of where within the documentation students are informed of all exit awards that relate to the programme, to ensure that all options available for students are clearly communicated.

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 that any exit awards of this programme do not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team, they clarified that there would be awards that students would be able to exit the programme with, but these were not currently named in the programme documentation. This standard requires that the exit awards and the programme documentation must make it clear that only HCPC approved programmes lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration. In line with the condition set under 6.7, as the visitors could not see any named exit awards for the programme, the visitors require further evidence of where it is stated in the programme documentation, that exit awards of this programme do not lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider presenting the information provided in the Course Information Form (CIF) on the education provider website.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the information provided to applicants, and were satisfied that it gave them the information they would require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a programme, and therefore that this standard is met. However, the visitors would like to recommend that the detail provided in the Course Information Form (CIF) is made available through the education provider website, to ensure that all admissions information is easily accessible to potential applicants of the programme. The visitors also noted that some information regarding the programme on the website referred to University wide regulations, for example, a requirement for 200 UCAS points, rather than the programme requirement of 240 UCAS points. The information provided in the CIF is an accurate reflection of the requirements of the programme, and therefore presenting it on the website could make it more accessible for applicants to allow them to make an informed choice regarding whether to apply going forward.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;
- expectations of professional conduct;
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- communication and lines of responsibility.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider further involvement of individuals from practice in the taught programme, to ensure that students continue to be fully prepared for the wide range of experiences they can expect on placement.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team, the visitors discussed the content of the skills days and were satisfied that this, and the information provided to students regarding placements ensured that they are prepared for placement. In discussion with the students, whilst the visitors noted that the majority of students felt well prepared for placement, some students felt that further information regarding processes that they would come across in a statutory placement would be useful as part of the preparation process. In discussion with practice educators, they indicated that further involvement of individuals from practice in the taught programme could assist in the preparation of students for placement experiences, and what they should expect on placement. The visitors would therefore like to recommend that the programme team consider further involvement of individuals from practice in the taught programme, to ensure that students have a greater understanding of the expectations of the placement experience,

and they continue to be prepared for the range of experiences and skills they will get on placement, reflecting the generic nature of the programme.

Ruth Baker
Dorothy Smith