

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Brighton
Programme name	MSc Social work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social Worker
Date of visit	27 – 28 November 2013

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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 13 February. 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 or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Social work – Full time and Part time. Separate reports exist for these programmes.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Gary Hickman (Social worker) Steve Benson (Social worker) Paul Bates (Paramedic)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	30 – 32
Chair	Phil Mandy (University of Brighton)
Secretary	Rebecca Mitchell (University of Brighton)

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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining four 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 did not make any 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

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.

Condition: The education provider must revisit all programme documentation, including advertising materials and the website, to ensure potential applicants and students have information about changes to bursary arrangements.

Reason: From the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider ensures potential applicants to the programme have all of the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. From the documentation and programme website, the visitors were unable to determine if, and how, information about possible changes to the fee structure due to changes in bursaries will be communicated to potential applicants and students. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants. Therefore they require the education provider to review the programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure potential applicants are informed and kept up to date regarding possible changes to the fee structure. In this way the visitors can determine how the programme can meet this standard by ensuring potential applicants and students have all the information they require in order to make an informed choice about the programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the formal protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users in practical sessions.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors noted that in the SETs mapping document under SET 3.14 the education provider put 'not applicable'. The visitors noted from discussion with the programme team that verbal consent has been sought from students when they were required to participate as a service user in practical simulation and role play activities. However, there was no evidence provided of any appropriate protocols in place for obtaining consent from students before they participated as a service user in practical and clinical teaching. The visitors considered that without consent protocols in place it would be hard to mitigate any risk involved when students participate as service users. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about the requirement for them to participate, or how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained. The visitors could also not determine how situations where students declined from participation 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 the formal protocols that are in place to obtain informed consent.

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 which awards confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register and which awards do not.

Reason: From the advertising materials and programme documentation provided, the visitors considered there to be insufficient clarity for students that exit awards do not lead to HCPC registration. The visitors considered it to be important that students understand the awards available and which lead to eligibility for HCPC registration. Therefore the visitors require the programme team to revisit the programme documentation to ensure it is clearly articulated for students to understand which awards confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register and which awards do not.

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 programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that there will be at least one external examiner who will be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. This standard requires it to be clearly articulated that the programme meets HCPC requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be appropriately registered with the HCPC. The visitors therefore require the programme team to submit evidence to demonstrate recognition of this standard within the programme documentation to determine this standard is met.

Gary Hickman
Steve Benson
Paul Bates