

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Central Lancashire
Programme name	MA in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time Work based learning
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	11 – 12 April 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. 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 4 July 2013. At the Committee meeting on 4 July 2013, 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 (in England) came onto the register on 1 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 accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the BA (Hons) Social Work and Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only). 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. 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 education provider and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Beverley Blythe (Social worker) Teri Rogers (Social worker) Peter Branston (Practitioner psychologist)
HCPC executive officers (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
HCPC observer	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	100
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Lyndsey McPhail (University of Central Lancashire)
Secretary	Louise Manley (University of Central Lancashire)
Members of the joint panel	Claire Stansbie (Internal Panel Member) Rick Fothergill (Internal Panel Member) Edd Graham-Hyde (Internal Panel Member) Ali Gardner (External Panel Member) Jim Greer (The College of Social Work) Amanda Hatton (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 54 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 3 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 2 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 clarify the information provided to potential applicants, particularly around additional potential costs of placements, in order to ensure they can make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the programme documentation prior to the visit. The programme team provided 'fact sheets' for the programme which provide potential applicants with information. In discussion with the students and the programme team, the visitors heard that the travel costs of some placements are not covered by the NHS Bursaries available to students, and that these costs will need to be covered by the students. Some of the students also stated that they were not informed of the possible travel requirements or financial implications of going on placements prior to joining the programme. The visitors heard from discussions with the programme team that some of this information may be covered in presentations at the interview day. However, they did not see sufficient evidence that all applicants to the programme are informed of the logistical arrangements associated with placements, including information about the potential distances students may be required to travel when attending placements and any additional costs associated with attending placement. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation, including all advertising material, to clearly highlight to potential applicants the possible distances students may be required to travel when attending placements and any additional personal costs associated with attending placements. In this way, the visitors can be assured that this standard is being met.

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 programme team must provide further evidence that a robust monitoring system for student attendance is in place; to include information as to what would trigger procedures for poor attendance.

Reason: The visitors were made aware from the documentation that 100% attendance is expected for both practice and academic modules. The education provider uses the electronic Student Attendance Monitoring (SAM) system to monitor student attendance for the academic modules. However, in discussions at the visit, students highlighted several instances where the system has not reported correctly. The visitors also heard that some staff did not use the SAM system, that some used a paper register to monitor attendance, and some did not monitor attendance at lectures at all. The student handbook states that where students' attendance falls below 100%, this '...may be taken into consideration by the Assessment Board (and may affect student progression and the award of marks)'. The practice learning document states that days absent in placement must be made up, and outlines the stages at which an absence will need to be escalated to the tutor, or supported with a medical note. However, there is no information as to what will trigger the procedures for low attendance, in placement or in

academic settings, or what specific action will be taken if students fail to attend. In order to ensure that this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence that there is an effective mechanism for recording student attendance. They also require further evidence of what will constitute low attendance in each setting, what specific action will be taken in such cases and how this policy is communicated to students on the programme.

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Condition: The programme team must provide further information around the implementation and content for action learning sets, and how they will ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum for the affected modules.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation prior to the visit and were made aware that action learning sets will be a key teaching and learning approach for the delivery of several modules. At the visit, the programme team further explained the details of the action learning sets, including the proposed number of students for each group, and some ideas for the tasks and themes. The visitors heard that three modules in the first year and two modules in the second year will use the action learning sets. There will be themed weeks to ensure greater cohesion of learning across the modules. However, the visitors did not see a finalised plan for the content that will be covered through the action learning sets, or how the teaching and learning will be implemented. As they will constitute a large proportion of the delivery of the programme's curriculum, the visitors require further evidence that there is a clear plan for the implementation and content of the action learning sets. The visitors will need to see further evidence that this learning and teaching technique will ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum, in order to be content that this SET will be met throughout the programme.

Recommendations

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider revisiting the documentation provided to students and placement educators in support of practice learning, to ensure that the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers are explicitly addressed.

Reason: The visitors were provided with a SOPs mapping document for the programme, outlining where each standard is addressed in the curriculum. The visitors were content that each SOP will be met by students on completion of the programme. However, they noted that the practice learning document has a heavy focus on achievement of the skills outlined by the professional body's framework, but is not overtly linked to the HCPC's SOPs. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted how the achievement of the standards of proficiency was more implicit in the practice learning documentation. They considered that this SET could be further demonstrated if the documents supporting practice placements were to more explicitly reflect the importance of achievement of the SOPs in practice. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider considers revisiting the relevant modules' documents, and the materials available to support students and practice educators in placements, to further highlight where the HCPC's SOPs are being covered.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider revisiting the documentation provided to students and placement educators around assessment of practice, to ensure that the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers are explicitly addressed.

Reason: The visitors were provided with a SOPs mapping document for the programme, outlining where each standard is addressed in the curriculum. The visitors were content that each SOP will be met by students on completion of the programme. However, they noted that the practice learning document has a heavy focus on achievement of the skills outlined by the professional body's framework, but is not overtly linked to the HCPC's SOPs. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted how the achievement of the standards of proficiency was more implicit in the practice learning documentation. They considered that this SET could be further demonstrated if the documents supporting practice placements were to more explicitly reflect the importance of achievement of the SOPs in practice. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider considers revisiting the assessment strategy, and documents to support students and practice educators in placements, to further highlight where the HCPC's SOPs are being assessed.

Beverley Blythe
Peter Branston
Teri Rogers