

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Chichester
Programme name	MA Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	19 – 20 March 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 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 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 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 professional body considered their endorsement 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 of HCPC visitors and profession	Robert Goemans (Social worker) Kim Bown (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	20 Full time once per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
First approved intake	September 2014
Chair	Mark Mason (University of Chichester)
Secretary	Katie Ackerman (University of Chichester)
Members of the joint panel	Helen Keville (The College of Social Work) Vicky Lawson Brown (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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the BA (Hons) Social Work, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

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 51 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining six 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

2.1 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 ensure that potential applicants of the programme are given a complete range of information, in order to make an informed choice about the programme.

Reason: During discussion with the programme team, the visitors highlighted the importance of providing full information about the programme so applicants are able to make informed decisions. The programme team indicated that the MA Programme handbook and Admission handbook were the main ways that students and applicants were provided with detailed information about the programme and the application process. Whilst, the documentation provided and discussion at the visit included information about the admissions policies for the programme, the visitors noted that potential applicants do not have access to the programme handbook, and the visitors could not see where in the admissions handbook potential applicants were informed of:

- the application process requirements;
- the enhanced disclosure and barring service and medical clearance;
- the interview day, the written tests and group work to be completed; and
- all costs associated with travel, particularly in regards to placement.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the above information is communicated to potential applicants, to ensure that they are able to make an informed decision regarding whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that they have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place before the programme commences in September 2014.

Reason: From a review of the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors noted that information regarding the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place for the BA (Hons) Social Work programme had been provided. However, the documentation provided limited information on the number of staff in place for the MA Social Work programme, and their relevant qualifications and experience. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted that the education provider is intending on “planned extra staffing resources” for the MA Social Work programme. However, the visitors were unable to determine exactly what the intended extra staffing would be. As a result, the visitors were unclear from the information provided, as to the number of staff that will be recruited to the programme in order for it to be delivered effectively. As such, the visitors require further evidence of the plans in place to ensure that a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff will be recruited to the programme team in advance of the programme starting.

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information regarding the staff members that are responsible for each module of the programme, and their relevant specialist expertise and knowledge in regards to their role.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit included programme team staff CV's and descriptions of the modules. However, from a review of the documentation the visitors could not see which member of staff was responsible for each module. As a result, the visitors were therefore unable to determine what subject areas are being taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors therefore require further information that demonstrates who the module leaders are for each module.

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the final practice placement handbook document, to ensure it effectively supports student learning in all settings.

Reason: The programme team submitted a 'practice placement handbook 2014 – 2015' to evidence how they support MA Social Work students learning whilst on placement. However, the visitors noted that the practice placement handbook was designed for students on the BA (Hons) Social Work programme, and the document made little reference to MA Social Work students. Discussions at the visit revealed that the practice placement handbook for the MA programme was still under review, and as of yet, not complete. In the absence of a practice placement handbook for this programme, the visitors could not see that the resources to support student learning in a practice setting were being effectively used. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that this standard can be met.

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

Condition: The programme team must revise programme documentation, including the website, to ensure the current available route for the MA Social Work is clearly articulated to potential applicants and students.

Reason: Discussion at the visit revealed that the programme team no longer wish to seek approval for the MA Social Work part time programme. However, the documentation and website shows the MA Social Work (work based) route as an option of study. In order to ensure that no confusion is caused to potential applicants and students, the visitors require the programme team to revise the programme documentation and ensure the current available route for the MA Social Work is clearly articulated in all materials associated with the programme. This way, visitors can be sure that resources to support student learning in all settings are being effectively used.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate that aegrotat awards do not lead to registration with the HCPC.

Reason: The SETs mapping documents submitted prior to the visit state that aegrotat awards do not lead to registration with the HCPC. However, the visitors could not see where this was articulated in the programme documentation, and were therefore not satisfied that this SET was met. This SET requires that the programme documentation clearly states that an aegrotat award will not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. The visitors therefore require the programme documentation is updated to clearly specify that an aegrotat award would not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. This is to provide clarity for students and to ensure that this standard is met.

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.

Recommendations

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Recommendation: The programme team should keep student access to journals under review to ensure that the learning resources for the programme continue to be appropriate to the curriculum, and readily available to students.

Reason: From discussion with the students it was revealed that they were satisfied with the resources associated with the BA (Hons) Social Work programme. However, some students spoke of difficulties of accessing key journals, as and when they needed it. Due to increase in demand on resources, with the introduction of this programme, the visitors would like to encourage the programme team to keep student access to journals under review, to ensure that resources continue to be readily available to all students going forward.

Robert Goemans
Kim Bown