

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of East Anglia
Programme name	PG Dip Mental Health (incorporating AMHP) Higher Specialist Award
Mode of delivery	Work based learning
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	8 – 9 October 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 a protected title 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.

As well as approving educational programmes for people who want to join the Register or have an annotation on their Registration record, the HCPC also approve a small number of programmes which are not linked to HCPC Registration. These programmes are for the profession of approved mental health practitioners (AMHPs) (for social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists).

The HCPC criteria for approving AMHP programmes set out the systems and processes an education provider is expected to have in place to deliver an AMHP programme, as well as the competencies professionals must achieve on completing the programme.

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 12 February 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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

When the regulation of social workers in England transferred from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to ourselves, we took responsibility for approving AMHP programmes in England. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) gives us powers to set criteria for approving AMHP programmes. A decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing AMHP programmes. This visit is to assess the programmes against the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals.

This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider and validating body 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.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Robert Goemans (Approved mental health professional) Lynn Heath (Approved mental health professional) Christine Morgan (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	12 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2015
Chair	Nicola Spalding (University of East Anglia)
Secretary	Robbie Meehan (University of East Anglia)

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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes	<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 assured that the programme meets all of the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals

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 44 of the criterion have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining six criterion.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. Conditions are set when certain criteria have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the criterion 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 can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular criterion has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

A.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of their accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) procedure for the programme. In particular, how any applications for AP(E)L are assessed and how such requirements and procedures are clearly communicated to applicants.

Reason: The visitors noted the information provided to applicants regarding the application for AP(E)L, specifically the generic website information that is provided to applicants. In discussions with the programme team the visitors noted that applicants were assessed on a case by case basis with regards to AP(E)L. The visitors also noted that the ability to receive AP(E)L for aspects of the programme differed depending on which previous modules were taken by potential applicants. To ensure this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence which clarifies the education provider's requirements regarding AP(E)L. In particular, the visitors require further information clarifying which elements (if any) of the programme an applicant can be exempted from completing through the AP(E)L process, and how this information is clearly communicated to applicants. Any further evidence submitted should also address how any assessment of AP(E)L is carried out by the programme team and the criteria against which any decisions regarding the awarding of AP(E)L are made.

B.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence that the necessary financial resources have been committed and planned to deliver the programme in conjunction with local authority commissioners.

Reason: In the programme documentation submitted prior to the visit the visitors noted the education provider's strategic intent regarding the delivery of the programme but no evidence of future funding assured for the AMHP programme. Visitors also noted the Informal Memorandums of Cooperation with Norfolk and Suffolk Local Authorities for twelve months from 2014. At the visit, the visitors noted the programme team had continued discussions with local authorities regarding their intentions to continue commissioning students from their respective organisations to undertake the programme. The visitors were advised that these discussions were progressing well and that there continues to be a clear interest in the programme. However, the visitors noted in the senior team meeting that there was a lack of representation of senior managers from either the university or the partner agencies and that no formal agreements have been made. In discussions with the senior team and placement educators, it was noted that Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council have verbally confirmed their intent to continue to commission students onto the programme. Although the visitors were clear there were potential opportunities for commissioned students to undertake the programme, they were unclear if any of these would be likely to be in place for the foreseeable future as there was no formal commitment from either Council. To be satisfied this criterion is met the visitors must be satisfied the education provider has enough support from employers to ensure it has a viable future. The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates

a clear intent, on the part of employers, to commission students to undertake the programme in the foreseeable future to be satisfied this criterion is met.

D.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which clearly articulates the knowledge, skills and experience required to perform the role of placement educators on the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted references to a number of documents submitted by the education provider in relation to how the programme meets this criterion, specifically the Quality Assurance of AMHP Placements and Practice Learning Opportunities Handbook and Portfolio Guidance. The Quality Assurance of AMHP Placements document outlines that there '...is no single qualification for being a practice educator or on-site supervisor for an AMHP student'. However, in discussions with the programme team, the visitors noted all placement educators must have completed a 60 credit at Master level module of the Practice Educator qualification in order to supervise AMHP students. Although clarified during the visit, the visitors could not clearly identify where in the programme documentation the qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience that the education provider requires in appointing individuals to be placement educators for the programme is reflected. In addition, the visitors could not determine how the education provider ensures employers are clearly informed of the requirements regarding the recruitment of placement educators who are appropriately qualified and experienced. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the education provider's requirements regarding the qualifications and experience of placement educators involved in the supervision of AMHP students. The information provided should clearly demonstrate how these requirements are communicated to employers involved in recruiting and appointing suitable placement educators.

D.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence to show how they confirm that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The visitors noted the documents submitted by the education provider in relation to how the programme meets this criterion, specifically the Quality Assurance of AMHP Placements. Discussions at the visit indicated that the placement provider will be responsible for identifying placement educators, checking registration details and ensuring they are currently practicing as an AMHP. From the evidence provided, the visitors could not see a system that would be used by the education provider to confirm that practice placement educators are appropriately registered and therefore meet the criteria they set out for practice placement educators. As a result, the visitors require further evidence of the process that will be in place to ensure that this criterion can be met.

E.8 Assessment regulations must clearly specify that any requirements for an aegrotat award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as an AMHP

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence that assessment regulations clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility to apply to a local authority to be approved as an AMHP.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not identify where it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to a local authority to be approved as an AMHP or that an aegrotat award is not given for this programme. The visitors were also unclear as to how this information is clearly communicated to students. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate where in the programme documentation it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to a local authority to be approved as an AMHP.

E.10 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 an appropriate professional register

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which makes clear in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional 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 an appropriate professional register. In order to determine this criterion is met, the visitors require further evidence of the HCPC requirements regarding external examiners within the programme documentation

Recommendations

B.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge

Recommendation: The education provider should consider keeping staff knowledge under review to ensure that those delivering the programme subject area have relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were satisfied that all modules are taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge, and therefore that this criterion is met. However, the visitors noted that many of the programme team were child care expert and very few of the programme team have had experience of being an Approved mental health professional. The visitors recommend that the education provider continues to review the amount of specialist expertise the core teaching staff team have. In this way the programme team may be able to identify how best to maintain and increase the level of specialist expertise and knowledge of the teaching staff going forward.

D.3 The practice placement settings must provide safe and supportive environment.

Recommendation: The visitors would like to encourage the programme team to review how practice placement providers ensure students are made aware of personal risks and safety issues relating to placement.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were satisfied that practice placement providers are expected to carry out relevant assessment of risks within the area of practice. However, discussions with students revealed a varied induction experience on placement in relation to personal risks and safety. From this information, the visitors would like to encourage the programme team to review the placement induction process employed by the practice placement provider, in particular, how practice placement provider inform students about risks and safety issues.

Lynn Heath
Robert Goemans
Christine Morgan