

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	University of Gloucestershire
<b>Programme name</b>	BSc (Hons) Social Work
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Social worker in England
<b>Date of visit</b>	3 – 4 September 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 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 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 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 accreditation 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	Kim Bown (Social worker) Richard Barker (Social worker) Sue Roff (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	50
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Sheila Ollin (University of Gloucestershire)
Secretary	Jayne Sedgwick (University of Gloucestershire)
Members of the joint panel	Robert Johns (The College of Social Work) Reshma Patel (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 satisfied 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 the relevant 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 seven SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. 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 can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally 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 update the information made available to students prior to taking up or making an offer of a place on the programme, particularly the requirements for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

**Reason:** Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to the education provider's admissions page for the BSc (Hons) Social Work. Although the website stated GCSE English requirements, the visitors were unable to locate any information on the required IELTS level for international students. In the meeting with the programme team it was highlighted that it is a requirement for international students to obtain an IELTS level 7 to be accepted onto the programme. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that this was an appropriate level, they were unable to identify where potential applicants would find this information. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to show how the admissions procedures give the applicants the information they require about IELTS to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on the programme.

### **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 update the information made available to students prior to taking up or making an offer of a place on the programme, particularly the requirements for Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL).

**Reason:** Prior to the visit, the visitors were directed to a number of documents which outlined the APEL policies and how students should apply. The visitors were satisfied with the policies and processes in place, however were unable to see how potential applicants to the BSc (Hons) Social Work were informed of APEL opportunities. The evidence provided also showed a page on the education provider's website which detailed APEL procedures, however, the visitors could not see how an applicant could easily find this information from the pages linked to the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme, especially without having any prior knowledge of APEL policies. Further to this, in the meeting with students, it was stated that several students were not aware of APEL opportunities and in some instances were made aware of the policies in place after the deadline had passed for applications to be considered for APEL. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show how the admissions procedures give the applicant the information they require about APEL policies to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on the programme.

### **3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.**

**Condition:** The education provider must submit further evidence to show how the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme fits in to the education provider's business plan.

**Reason:** Documentation provided prior to the visit included a business plan for the institute of Education and Public services. Whilst the visitors could see that there was a clear commitment to the Institute that social work sits within, they were unable to identify any strategic plan or commitment from the education provider relating specifically to the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme. At the visit, the visitors met with the senior team who were able to provide a little more information about the future of social work within the education provider, including a focus on building relationships with local providers for placements and the possibility of a post qualifying programme. However, the visitors felt that while this clarified some future plans for the programme the education provider did not demonstrate how the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan, and how the programme would guarantee that students would progress through the full duration of their programme at the education provider. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme fits into the education provider's business plan.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must revise and update the programme documentation to ensure it is accurate and reflects the status of current regulation.

**Reason:** The visitors noted the documentation provided for the visit contained some inaccuracies when referring to HCPC requirements. For example page 51 of the Course Guide 2013 – 14 final version (2) states "BSc Social Work confers the ability to apply for registered status and to hold the protected title of Social Worker as a graduate." Successful graduates would be eligible to apply for registration only as they would need to meet the HCPC's health and character requirements at the point of registration. The visitors also noted incorrect references to the HCPC name. For example page 1 of the Declaration of suitability for social work 2013 – 14 states "The Health and Care Professionals Council requires that Universities have suitable processes in place". We are the Health and Care Professions Council, not the Health and Care professionals Council. The visitors considered these inaccuracies will need to be corrected for the students to have accurate information about their programme. The visitors therefore require the programme team to review the programme documentation taking into account the above details to ensure it is accurate and reflects the status of current regulation.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must submit further evidence to demonstrate there are appropriate protocols in place to inform students about the nature of participating in activities such as role play and their right to confidentiality.

**Reason:** Documentation provided at the visit included a form titled Consent to participate in activities (Supporting evidence file 2 (a), section 4, (5.1)). The visitors

were satisfied that this form informed students of the requirement to take part in role play and other shared activities on the programme. However, the visitors could not see how students were informed about the nature of participating in activities such as role plays as service users, the personal or cultural elements that could emerge, and any impact on their academic progression if they chose to opt out of participating. The visitors were also unable to identify where students were informed of their right to confidentiality. The visitors considered it to be important for the programme team to ensure they have informed students fully about their right to confidentiality and to opt-out when appropriate. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence to demonstrate there is a protocol in place to inform students about the nature of participating in activities such as role play, and their right to confidentiality.

**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 education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that appropriate monitoring systems are in place for student attendance.

**Reason:** The visitors were made aware from the documentation that 80% attendance is expected for academic modules. The visitors were satisfied with the attendance requirements and the policies related to it. However, the visitors were unable to identify any formalised and effective monitoring systems in place. In discussions with the programme team the visitors heard that attendance is currently recorded on a paper register. Additionally, in the meeting with students, the visitors heard that students' attendance was not always recorded and there were several instances where students were able to leave lectures early without impacting on their attendance records. The visitors consider monitoring attendance to be a vital component in ensuring that students are fit to practice and able to meet the Standards Of Proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the register. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to show that there is a formalised and effective monitoring system in place to record attendance.

**5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.**

**Condition:** The education provider needs to provide further information regarding the system that is in place to ensure that practice placement educators in all settings receive appropriate training, and that this training is kept up to date.

**Reason:** In discussion with the programme team at the visit, the visitors were informed that all new practice placement educators are required to complete appropriate training, however, the visitors could not see evidence of a process in place to monitor which placement educators had received training, and when. In addition to this, in discussion with practice placement educators, the visitors were informed that practice educator training was recommended but not compulsory. It was also stated that some students had previously been placed with practice educators who had not undertaken appropriate training prior to taking on a student. The visitors were also unable to identify any refresher training sessions for practice educators. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that practice educator training is compulsory and that there is an effective system in place to monitor which practice educators have undergone training.



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

**Condition:** The education provider must revisit and update the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where in the assessment regulations there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors were directed to the course guide 2014 – 15 final version (2), page 53 which states “condonement of modules cannot be allowed.” In addition to this, in the meeting with the programme team it was stated that there is a fall back award available for students, however the award title does not contain a reference to social work. The visitors were unable to determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation.

## Recommendations

### **3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider may wish to consider providing more opportunity for staff to engage in research projects.

**Reason:** From documentation and meetings with the programme team, the visitors were content that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted that the staff could have more opportunities to engage in research projects. The visitors would like the education provider to consider reviewing the current provision and opportunities for research projects in the staff development programme and suggest broadening these opportunities as this could better inform teaching of evidence based practice.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider may wish to consider reviewing the current resources available to students, with particular reference to the availability of books.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided and tour of the facilities, the visitors were content that this standard is met. However, from meeting with the students, the visitors noted that at times throughout the programme students may struggle to obtain the relevant book for their modules through the library or online e-book provision. Particularly for some e-books, the license only enabled one student to access the document at any one time. The visitors would like the education provider to consider reviewing and increasing the current resources available to students, with particular focus on library and e-books.

Richard Barker  
Kim Bown  
Sue Roff