

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Gloucestershire
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time accelerated
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	22 – 23 September 2016

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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 9 February 2017. 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. 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.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Robert Goemans (Social worker in England) Sheila Skelton (Social worker in England) Mohammed Jeewa (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Rebecca Stent
Proposed student numbers	40 per cohort, one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2017
Chair	Nadine Sulkowski (University of Gloucestershire)
Secretary	Yvonne Metcalfe (University of Gloucestershire)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as the programme is new and has not yet run, so external examiner reports are not available.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

The HCPC did not see the specialist teaching accommodation as the nature of the pre-registration qualification does not require any specialist laboratories or teaching rooms.

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 43 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 15 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 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 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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how applicants are given the information they require about the English language entry requirements in order to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on a programme.

Reason: In the documentation reviewed prior to the visit, the visitors noted that the requirement for students for whom English is not their first language is an international English language testing system (IELTS) score of 7. However, the visitors also noted that the website and the prospectus stated that an IELTS score of 6.5 is the requirement. At the visit, the programme team clarified that they require an IELTS score of 7 for applicants for whom English is not their first language. However, the visitors noted that inconsistencies in the documentation may be misleading for prospective applicants. As such, the visitors require further evidence about the information available to applicants, including English language requirements for applicants who do not have English as their first language, so that applicants can make an informed choice about whether to take up 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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how potential applicants are given the information they require about the criminal convictions checks process, including any associated costs, in order to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on a programme.

Reason: From a review of the document 'Procedures for the Review of Applicants with Declared Criminal Convictions' prior to the visit, the visitors noted that all applicants are required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and that the cost would be covered by the applicant. However, the visitors noted that this document is not available to prospective applicants. Therefore, the visitors noted that potential applicants would not be aware of the requirement to undertake a DBS check and the requirement for applicants to cover the cost of this check. As such, the visitors require further evidence which demonstrates that applicants have the information they require about the DBS process and associated costs for the applicant in order to make an informed choice about whether to take up 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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how the admissions procedures give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require about the academic entry requirements in order to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the prospectus and website, that the education provider would consider applicants with a '2.1 honours degree or equivalent in a related subject' or 'a relevant level 6 qualification'. However, it was not clear from the documentation or at the visit which relevant degrees or level 6 qualifications would be accepted as appropriate academic criteria for entry to the programme. Without clarification about the accepted entry requirements, the visitors could not determine how the admissions procedures give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require about academic requirements. As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the academic entry requirements are clearly communicated to both the applicant and the education provider so that they are able to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the admissions procedures apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic entry standards.

Reason: The visitors noted from the prospectus and website, that the education provider would consider applicants with a '2.1 honours degree or equivalent in a related subject' or 'a relevant level 6 qualification'. However, it was not clear from the documentation or at the visit which relevant degrees or qualifications would be accepted. As such, the visitors could not determine whether the admissions procedures were applying appropriate academic selection and entry criteria and whether this criteria would be applied consistently. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to clarify the academic entry criteria and how it is appropriate for this programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must clarify whether accreditation of prior (experiential) learning will be permitted on this programme and, if it is, that it is appropriate to exempt students from elements of learning and / or assessment.

Reason: From a review of the documentation it was clear that APEL was not permitted on this programme. At the visit, the programme team initially confirmed that APEL would not be permitted. However, after further discussions, the programme team stated that they may consider exempting students from certain modules if they had previously studied programmes where learning outcomes of the modules were the same. Therefore, the visitors were unclear about whether accreditation of prior (experiential) learning would be accepted for this programme and, if it is, how the AP(E)L scheme would be used to appropriately exempt students from elements of learning and assessment. Therefore, the education provider must clarify whether AP(E)L will be permitted on this programme and, if it is, how the AP(E)L process will be applied to effectively exempt students from elements of teaching and assessment.

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 provide further evidence to demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place at the academic setting to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation prior to the visit that there are currently up to 60 students per cohort per year on the approved BSc (Hons) Social Work programme and that the education provider proposes to recruit up to 40 students per cohort per year for this programme. From a review of the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that there are currently five full time equivalent (FTE) members of staff in place to teach on this programme who also teach on the undergraduate programme. The visitors noted that an additional 1.2 FTE members of staff will be recruited and that there will be visiting lecturers to teach on the programme. The visitors also learnt that visiting lecturers would always be accompanied by the relevant module tutor at lectures. However, the visitors could not determine from discussions at the visit how the current number of teaching staff is sufficient to deliver this programme effectively in conjunction with the current undergraduate programme, particularly as module tutors still have to be present for visiting lecturers' sessions. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that subject areas are taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Reason: From a review of the staff profiles, the visitors were satisfied with the specialist expertise and knowledge of the staff in place on the programme. However, the visitors noted from page 27 of the course handbook that the programme leader is the module tutor for five of the eight modules. In the module descriptors, the programme leader is listed as the module tutor for all modules and in the overview document, the programme leader is listed as the module tutor for three of the modules. At the visit, the programme team clarified that the programme leader would not be the module tutor for all modules or five modules. However, it was not confirmed who would be the tutor for these modules and the documentation currently lists different information about module tutors. As such, the visitors were not clear about who would be the module tutor for each module and so they could not determine that all subject areas would be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. In addition, as the visitors were unable to determine whether there will be an adequate number of staff on the programme, the visitors could not determine how the delivery of the subject areas would be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that subject areas will be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

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.

Reason: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that they have the mechanisms in place for monitoring attendance.

Condition: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that all taught sessions are compulsory and that there is an 80 per cent attendance requirement for this programme. However it was not clear from the documentation, or in discussions at the visit, how attendance will be monitored. In addition, the visitors were unclear about any consequences of missed compulsory sessions, including the consequences for students whose attendance falls below the requirement of 80 per cent. As such, the visitors could not be certain that follow-up action would be taken for missed attendance and that students would gain the required knowledge from missed teaching before they complete the programme. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about how attendance is monitored, any consequences of missed compulsory teaching and how this information is clearly communicated to students.

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.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that, if there is an AP(E)L route for this programme, students are able to meet the SOPs for social workers in England on completion of the programme if they enter the programme via the AP(E)L route.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that AP(E)L is not permitted on this programme. However, at the visit, the programme team stated that they may consider exempting students from certain modules if they had previously studied programmes where the learning outcomes of the modules were the same. Therefore, the visitors were unclear about whether accreditation of prior (experiential) learning would be accepted for this programme and, if it is, how students who are exempt from certain elements of the programme will achieve all of the learning outcomes and successfully meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England at the end of the programme. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate, if there is an AP(E)L route, how the AP(E)L policy ensures that students will achieve the learning outcomes for exempted modules so that they are able to meet the SOPs for social workers in England.

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: In the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider follows a Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) procedure for approving all placements as a means of ensuring that practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment. However, the visitors were unclear about how this QAPL procedure would work in practice and whether the university carries out the audit of all placements. From the evidence and the discussions at the visit, the

visitors were unable to determine whether the education provider has a thorough and effective system for approving all placements. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how this process ensures that the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about how the education provider ensures that the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that they have a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: In the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider follows a Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) procedure for approving all placements. However, the visitors were unclear about how this QAPL procedure works in practice. In addition, at the visit, the visitors learnt that the education provider delegates the approval of placements to the placement coordinator at one of the placement providers in attendance at the visit, Hereford County Council. The visitors were also unclear about how this delegation works and whether this responsibility is delegated to the placement coordinators at all placement providers. Furthermore, the visitors could not determine how the education provider's policy ensures that this delegation process is thorough and effective for approving all placements. As such, the visitors were unable to determine whether the education provider has a thorough and effective system for approving all placements. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about the approval and monitoring process for all placements and how the education provider ensures that, when the approval of placements is delegated to a placement coordinator at a placement provider, this is carried out effectively and thoroughly.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Reason: In the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider follows a Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) procedure for approving all placements as a means of ensuring that the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in relation to students. However, the visitors were unclear about how this QAPL procedure works and whether the university carries out the audit of all placements. From the evidence and the discussions at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine whether the education provider has a thorough and effective system for approving all placements. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how this process ensures that the practice placement settings have equality and diversity policies in relation to students. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence about how the education provider ensures that the placement providers have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting.

Reason: In the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider follows a Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) procedure for approving all placements as a means of ensuring that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting. However, the visitors were unclear about how this QAPL procedure works and whether the university carries out the audit of all placements. From the evidence and the discussions at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine whether the education provider has a thorough and effective system for approving all placements. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how this process ensures that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting. As such, the visitors require further evidence that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: In the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider follows a Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) procedure for approving all placements as a means of ensuring that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. However, the visitors were unclear about how this QAPL procedure works and whether the university carries out the audit of all placements. From the evidence and the discussions at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine whether the education provider has a thorough and effective system for approving all placements. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how this process ensures that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. As such, the visitors require further evidence about how the education provider ensures that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: In the documentation and at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider follows a Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) procedure for approving all placements as a means of ensuring that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed. However, the visitors were unclear about how this QAPL procedure works and whether the university carries out the audit of all placements. From the evidence and the discussions at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine whether the education provider has a thorough and effective system for approving all placements. As such, the visitors were unable to

determine how this process ensures that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

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.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that the assessment of learning outcomes ensures that students who are exempt from certain elements of the programme are able to demonstrate that they have met the SOPs for social workers in England if an AP(E)L route is permitted on this programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that AP(E)L is not permitted on this programme. However, at the visit, the programme team stated that they may consider exempting students from certain modules if they had previously studied programmes where the learning outcomes of the modules were the same. Therefore, the visitors were unclear about whether accreditation of prior (experiential) learning would be accepted for this programme and, if it is, how assessment of students will ensure that students who are exempt from certain elements of the programme will achieve all of the learning outcomes and successfully meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England at the end of the programme. Therefore, the education provider must demonstrate how, if there is an AP(E)L route, how the AP(E)L policy ensures that students will achieve the learning outcomes for exempted modules so that they are able to demonstrate that they have met the SOPs for social workers in England.

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 provide evidence to demonstrate that the assessment regulations clearly specify the requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Reason: From a review of the documentation prior to the visit, the visitors did not see any reference to an aegrotat award in the assessment regulations for this programme. In discussions at the visit, it was unclear whether an aegrotat award would be given for this programme. As such it was not clearly specified that, if an aegrotat is awarded, that this does not provide eligibility for admission to the Register. Therefore, the visitors require evidence which clarifies whether aegrotat awards are given for this programme and, where they are given, that it is clearly communicated to students and staff that students who are awarded an aegrotat award are not eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC.

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