Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Hull
Programme name	Post Graduate Diploma Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	5 – 6 June 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 10 October 2013. At the Committee meeting, 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 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 visit also considered the following programmes – MA Social Work- Full time and Part time and BA (Hons) Social Work – Full time and Part time. 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 the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	David Childs (Social worker) Aidan Worsley (Social worker) Angela Duxbury (Therapeutic radiographer)
HCPC executive officer	Amal Hussein
Proposed student numbers	82 (MA and Post Graduate Diploma Social Work)
Chair	Jason Eames (University of Hull)
Secretary	Denise South (University of Hull)
Members of the joint panel	Vicky Lawson-Brown (The College of Social Work) Rosemary Littlechild (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	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

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 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 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

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure the programme documentation accurately reflects the current landscape of regulation for social workers, in England.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included several instances of incorrect and out of date terminology. There are references to the previous regulator, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) throughout the documentation. For example Volume 2 (31) page 88 the education provider states that 'It should be noted that a student may be subjected to either one or all of the above University and/or GSCC proceedings'. From August 2012, the Health and Care Professions Council hold regulatory responsibility for social workers in England and therefore several references to the General Social Care Council (GSCC) as the regulator for social workers in England is incorrect as the GSCC no longer exists. Also, the visitors noted that throughout Volume 2 it is stated that upon completion of the programme '…allows you to register with the HCPC' and '…enables your admission to the HCPC register'. Students are eligible to apply for registration but this does not necessarily mean that they will be registered, as the HCPC performs a health and character tests at the point of registration. It is important that students are equipped with accurate information, and the visitors considered it to be important the programme documentation accurately reflects the HCPC and HCPC's role in the regulation of the profession. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to correct all instances of inconsistent and incorrect terminology, to ensure that students are not unintentionally misinformed either about the HCPC or the current landscaper of regulation. In this way the visitors can determine how the resources to support student learning are being effectively used

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

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the formal protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users in practical sessions.

Reason: The visitors noted through discussions with the students and the programme team that verbal consent had been sought from students when they were required to participate as a service user in practical simulation and role play activities. However, there was no evidence provided of any formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students before they participated as a service user in practical and clinical teaching. The visitors considered that without consent protocols in place it would be hard to mitigate any risk involved when students participated as service users. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about the requirement for them to participate, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained. The visitors could also not determine how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of the formal protocols that are in place to obtain informed consent

from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical teaching.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly articulate what awards confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register and those exit awards which do not.

Reason: From discussions with the programme team the visitors were satisfied that anyone successfully completing this programme would be eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC. It was also clear that anyone who received an exit award would not be eligible to apply to the HCPC Register. However, in the documentation submitted by the education provider, the visitors could not determine how students were informed about the impact of achieving an alternative exit award on their ability to apply to the Register. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme team ensure that students understand which awards confer eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register and which do not.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The programme team should consider how best to enhance the preparation given to service users when they are involved with the teaching aspects of the programme.

Reason: From the discussion with the service users, it was clear that service users were heavily involved in the development and delivery of the programme. They spoke of a number of support mechanisms that were available to them by the university such as shadowing days and buddying system. The visitors are therefore content that this standard is met. However, the visitors recommend that the programme team consider enhancing further the structural support in place especially when servicer users are involved in delivering the teaching of the programme. The visitors feel that in this way the programme team may be able to enhance the support they provide to service users and also enhance the teaching experience for 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.

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

Reason: The visitors were provided with SOPs mapping document for the programme, outlining where each standard is addressed in the curriculum. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted how they ensured the achievement of the standards of proficiency with in the programme for the relevant part of the register and were content that each SOP will be met by students on completion of the programme. Therefore the visitors are content that this standard has been met. However, the visitors noted that the documentation had a narrow focus, particularly on the achievement of the skills outlined by the professional body's framework. In turn this meant that the skills being achieved were not always explicitly linked to the HCPC's SOPs. Therefore the visitors recommend that the programme team considers how best to ensure that the documentation provided to students reflects the importance of achievement of the SOPs throughout the programme. In this way the programme team may better embed the understanding of the SOPs role in the regulation of a professional undertaking social work into students learning.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the education provider consider how they can best ensure that students on placements consistently and clearly identify themselves to services users as student social workers.

Reason: Through the visit it was clear that service users would be aware they were working with students and so the visitors considered this standard to have been met. However, from the documents and discussions, there was some confusion with how

students introduced themselves to service users. The students indicated they would use 'student social worker' to introduce themselves while the practice placement documentation used the terminology of 'social worker in training' (SWIT). The visitors felt that this could be confusing for students considering how to introduce themselves. It was also highlighted that the placement providers had mixed views on whether SWIT clearly identified the students as students to servicer users and that the title SWIT could be linked with registered social workers when undertaking their ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment). The visitors therefore suggest that the programme team considers how best to address the differences in title used by the students when introducing themselves to service users. In this way the programme team may clarify the issue and enhance a student's ability to identify themselves clearly and accurately to service users when on placement.

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David Childs
Aidan Wosley
Angela Duxbury

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