hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Leeds
Programme name	Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	25 – 26 February 2014

Contents

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 ongoing 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 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 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 visit also considered the following programmes, 'MA in Social Work' and BA Honours in Social Work'. The professional body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with a chair (from the school of healthcare, that the HCPC was satisfied was independent of the programmes being reviewed) 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. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	David Childs (Social worker in England) Gary Hickman (Social worker in England) Sarah Johnson (Occupational psychologist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	20
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Janet Holt (University of Leeds)
Secretary	Deborah Schofield (University of Leeds)
Members of the joint panel	Lynn Heath (The college of social work) William Penson (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	☒	☐	☐
Programme review	☒	☐	☐
Memorandum of cooperation	☒	☐	☐
Assessment Handbook	☒	☐	☐
APL Code of Practice	☒	☐	☐

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)	☐	☐	☒

The HCPC did not see the as the nature of the post-registration qualification does not require any specialist laboratories or 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 49 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 8 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 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 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 revisit all programme documentation, including advertising materials, to ensure that potential applicants and students are made aware of the changes to bursary arrangements.

Reason: In the documentation provided, the visitors noted information regarding fees and bursaries. The visitors highlighted that since September 2013 bursary arrangements for social work students have changed. The visitors were unable to determine from the documentation if information around the new bursary structure and allocation will be communicated to potential applicants and students. In particular, the visitors were unable to locate where potential applicants could find information specifically related to the bursaries available for the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only) at Leeds University. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants and therefore, require the education provider to review the programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure that potential applicants and students are informed and kept up to date regarding possible changes to the bursary structure. In this way the visitors can determine how the programme can meet this standard by ensuring that applicants have all the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up 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 demonstrate that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: The visitors heard that the School of Healthcare, in which the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only) sits within, is currently under review and it is possible that there may not be a future for the programme. Further to this, in discussions with current students it was stated that students felt anxious about their future on the programme and the viability to complete their studies at the University of Leeds. The visitors consider that this poses a risk to the current and future delivery of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence that the programme has a secure place in the education providers business plan and that current students will be fully supported throughout the duration of their studies and up to graduation at the University of Leeds.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of effective communication to students and practice educators to ensure the programme is effectively managed.

Reason: Throughout meetings with the students and practice educators the visitors heard that both parties felt that communication from programme management was limited and sometimes withheld. It was specifically noted that students felt feedback

given in staff-student liaison meetings was not taken forward nor was feedback provided on the outcomes. In addition to this, students were of the understanding that if the review decided to discontinue the social work provision, they would be moved to Huddersfield of Bradford campus but still graduate under the University of Leeds. However after speaking to the programme team is was stated that this was not the case and that all students would complete their degree at the University of Leeds. The visitors consider that effective communication is vital to successful programmes management, including ensuring that important information has been heard. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence of the communication systems used between students, staff and practice educators to ensure effective programme management.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further information of any external contributors to the programme. Specifically, the education provider must provide evidence to show how they ensure the quality of teaching from guest lecturers.

Reason: From documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were satisfied that current permanent staff to the programme had the relevant knowledge and expertise to deliver their subject areas. However, from meetings with students and the programme team it became clear that, from time to time, guest lecturers and external contributors taught on the programme. It was also noted that the programme had recently lost their law teaching provision. The visitors were unable to locate any information that enabled them to determine whether external contributors had the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver their subject area. In addition to this, it was unclear if the previous law provision had been suitably replaced. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to show that any external contributors to the programme have the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver their subject area. And that the teaching provision for law modules will be adequately covered.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show how they ensure continuing professional and research development for staff.

Reason: From the documentation, the visitors were unable to determine how the teaching staff maintained their research, teaching and professional development to enable them to deliver an effective programme. In a meeting with the programme team, the visitors heard that a number of staff engaged in various research projects and further education. However, from this meeting the visitors were not able to gain a full understanding of the current participation from staff in research and continued professional development. The visitors noted it is important for the programme curriculum to ensure the teaching staff are up to date academically and professionally. The visitors therefore require further information to evidence the current involvement of staff in professional and research development to show that they will continue to deliver the programme effectively.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation prior to the visit. They noted areas in the documentation that were inaccurate, inconsistent or were not reflective of the current setting of regulation for social workers in England. For example page 11 of the 'Practice Educator Award' module handbook states "…in line with the GSCC revised wording for paragraph 49 of the PQ requirements." Similarly there are also references to documents and guidelines attributed to the HCPC, which are either incorrect or have not been updated since the change in regulatory body from the GSCC to the HCPC. For example the 'Practice Learning Funding Agreement' states that "The Health and Care professions Council (HCPC) administers funding for practice learning to Universities and teaching institutions offering the social work degree." The HCPC does not provide funding for practice learning.
The visitors considered these inaccuracies will need to be corrected for the students to receive accurate information about their programme through their practice educators. The visitors therefore require the programme team to review the programme documentation taking into account the above detail to ensure it is accurate and reflects the status of current regulation.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
  * **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
  * **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
  * **expectations of professional conduct;**
  * **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
  * **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must clarify the mechanisms in place that ensure students and practice placement educators have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved in the 20 day placement 'HECS 5295 Professional practice 1'**.**

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit and discussions with the programme team the visitors heard the rationale and justification for students undertaking a 20 day placement. When asked about the learning outcomes the visitors also heard that, from this particular placement, students were expected to understand the role of the social worker in relation to the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs). However, in a meeting with students it was stated that students were unaware of any learning outcomes for the placement and were of the understanding that the placement was not connected to the SOPs. Students also stated that their practice educators were unaware of any learning outcomes associated with the placement. There were no placement educators present in the practice educator meeting who currently provided this specific placement. In the absence of any practice educators who provided placements for the 'HECS 5295 Professional practice 1' the visitors could not be certain

that this standard has been met. The visitors were satisfied with the learning outcomes in place, however, were concerned that this information was not being adequately communicated to both students and practice educators. The visitors noted that it is important that students and practice placement educators were aware of the learning outcomes attached to each specific placement. Therefore, the visitors require further information to demonstrate how students and practice placement educators are fully prepared for the 20 days placement 'HECS 5295 Professional practice 1'**.**

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 programme documentation to ensure that prospective students understand that registration with the HCPC is not automatic upon completion of the programme.

Reason: From documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors noted that there were inconsistencies in the wording used to inform current and prospective students of the process of applying for HCPC registration. For example page 65 and 66 of the MA validation document uses the title "Masters in Social Work with Professional Registration to Practice Social Work." The visitors note that this could imply to students that they are automatically registered with the HCPC on completion of the programme and is consequently misleading information. The visitors therefore require that the education provider revisits the programme documentation to ensure that prospective and current students understand that completion of the course does not provide automatic registration.

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David Childs
Gary Hickman
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