

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	University of Salford
<b>Programme name</b>	Post Graduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up)
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Social worker in England
<b>Date of visit</b>	9 – 10 October 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. 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 3 December 2013. 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 part of a joint event. The professional body considered their endorsement 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, outline their decisions on the programme's status.

## Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Michael Branicki (Social worker) Dorothy Smith (Social worker) Ruth Baker (Practitioner psychologist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	60 across two partnerships
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2014
Chair	Debra Leighton (University of Salford)
Secretary	Julie Evans (University of Salford)
Members of the joint panel	Jane Jenkins (Internal Panel Member) Lee Sobo-Allen (The College of Social Work) Bill Penson (The College of Social Work) Annie Hudson (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"/>

The HCPC met with graduates from the MA Social Work (Professional Practice) (Step Up to Social Work) programme.

## 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 three 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 provide further evidence to demonstrate applicants are fully apprised of the expectations of the programme particularly considering any interruptions, delays or failure of practice placements and the possible associated financial expenditures.

**Reason:** The documentation provided for the visit indicated the partnerships hold assessment centres for admission onto this programme. It was indicated that through these assessment centres information about the intense nature of the programme, the critical timings for progressing through the programme and the expectations of students are provided. Discussion with the students indicated they believed an interruption, of any length, to a placement would be considered as a fail of that placement and therefore would lead to a termination of their place on the programme. Further discussions with the senior team, placement educators and programme team indicated they had not considered in detail the implications and actions to be taken in the case of a placement being interrupted, delayed or failed. Discussion with all parties at the visit considered the following points:

- the intense timing of the 14 month programme;
- the potential financial costs being incurred;
- the possibilities of transference to other programmes;
- the possibilities of continuing or extending placements;
- the differences between the two partnerships; and
- the potential application of appeals processes if clear information was not communicated to students.

The visitors stress that the education provider need to provide information about the implications of interruptions, delays or failure of practice placements and associated financial expenditures, for applicants prior to them entering into contractual arrangements with partnerships in order that they are able to make an informed decision about the programme. The visitors also considered this would mitigate the potential use of appeals processes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate applicants are fully apprised of the expectations of the programme particularly considering any interruptions, delays or failure of practice placements and the possible associated financial expenditures.

### **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 revisit the programme documentation to include further detail of the implications of interruptions, delays and failing practice placements.

**Reason:** The documentation provided for the visit included a practice placement handbook for students, practice educators and onsite supervisors. There was some indication within the handbook (page 12) as to the implications and actions to be taken in the cases of interrupted, delayed or failed placements. Discussion with the students indicated they believed an interruption, of any length, to a placement would be considered as a fail of that placement and therefore would lead to a termination of their place on the programme. Further discussions with the senior team, placement educators and programme team indicated they had not considered in detail the implications and actions to be taken in the case of a placement being interrupted, delayed or failed. Discussion with all parties at the visit considered the following points:

- the intense timing of the 14 month programme;
- the potential financial costs being incurred;
- the possibilities of transference to other programmes;
- the possibilities of continuing or extending placements;
- the differences between the two partnerships; and
- the potential application of appeals processes if clear information was not communicated to students.

The visitors also heard that progressing past the first 70 days placement was the critical stress point for students and that the placement educators felt more flexibility could be applied in the 100 days placement. The visitors stress that the education provider need to provide information about the implications of interruptions, delays to placement and failing to progress, for students in order to mitigate the potential use of appeals processes. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation to include further detail of the implications of interruptions, delays and failing practice placements.

**6.11 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 the Register.**

**Condition:** The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the 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 specific to this programme. The visitors were satisfied that there was a system of external examiners in place and were content with the current external examiner for the programme. However, it was not evident from the documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are agreed with HCPC. The visitors need to see evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that this standard continues to be met.

Michael Branicki  
Dorothy Smith  
Ruth Baker