

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Sheffield
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	9 – 10 April 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 ongoing approval of the programme at the education provider. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 15 May. At this meeting, the Committee confirmed the ongoing approval of the programme. This means 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 (in England) 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 MA in Social Work. 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. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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 by the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Beverley Blythe (Social worker) David Ward (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	65 per cohort once a year inclusive of students from the MA in Social Work programme
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Jacqui Marsh (University of Sheffield)
Secretary	Maureen Howard (University of Sheffield)
Members of the joint panel	Rosemary Littlechild (The College of Social Work) Kath Morris (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"/>

During the visit the HCPC also met with service user and carer representatives.

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 the programme is approved.

The visitors did not set any conditions for the programme.

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 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.

Recommendations

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team consider implementing training or instruction specifically for the role of student recruitment interview panel member.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied the programme has effective management structures and systems in place and so are satisfied this SET is met. During the visit, discussion indicated the programme's student recruitment interview panels included a service user representative, a practice placement representative and members of the programme team. It was also indicated the service user representatives did not always receive training prior to taking part in these panels. The visitors considered that the programme team offered support for service user representatives at all times however felt that the education provider should endeavour to support the programme management in ensuring instruction or training for the role of interview panel member has taken place. In this way the programme team can support all members of the interview panel and ensure everyone understands their role and the procedures in place. The visitors therefore recommend the programme team look to implement training or instruction specifically for the role of student recruitment interview panel member.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team consider formalising the informal student feedback arrangements.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated the programme is subject to regular monitoring and evaluations systems, the visitors are satisfied this SET is met. The visitors heard there are two main mechanisms to collect student feedback. There is a formally arranged departmental student/staff committee with representatives from all programmes in the department. Due to the timings, students from this programme are not always able to attend. There is also a mechanism where students can meet directly with the director of social work. It is expected this meeting is held regularly however it was explained that it is most often conducted on an informally arranged basis. The visitors agreed student feedback was collected and where necessary acted on in an appropriate manner. However, the visitors suggest it would be useful for the programme team to formalise further these informal feedback arrangements. The visitors feel this would enhance involvement and protect the student feedback process.

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

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team ensure language is consistent when referencing HCPC registration within the programme documentation.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied that the resources to support student learning are effectively used and so are satisfied this SET is met. The visitors noted references to the HCPC were made throughout the documentation. The visitors noted within the documentation and information provided when referring to conferring the award it was not always consistent in stating the programme leads to eligibility to apply for HCPC

registration. The visitors felt this could lead to confusion over whether an individual would automatically be processed for registration or not. The visitors suggest the programme team ensure language is consistent when referencing HCPC registration to ensure there are no confusions.

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team ensure they monitor the rolling out of the new assessments through the assessment monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Reason: The documentation and discussion highlighted significant changes have been made to the assessment methods of the programme. There is a wide range of assessment methods and a lot of learning outcomes for each assessment. The visitors were satisfied with the assessment strategy and assessment monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place and so are satisfied this SET is met. With the diverse range of assessments and associated learning outcomes, the visitors suggest the programme team ensure they monitor the rolling out of the new assessments through the assessment monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This is to ensure the efficacy of the assessments and allow them to make adjustments if required.

Beverley Blythe
David Ward