

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Wolverhampton
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	20 – 21 November 2013

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6

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 27 March. At this 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 (in England) 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 education provider and the professional body (The College of Social Work (TCSW)) considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the MA Social Work, full time and PG Diploma Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only), full time TCSW 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. A separate report, produced by the professional body outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Michael Branicki (Social Worker) Gary Dicken (Social Worker) Joanna Jackson (Physiotherapist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	60 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Kay Biscoomb
Secretary	Toby Roy
Members of the joint panel	Karen Jones (The College of Social Work) Reshma Patel (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"/>

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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining four 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 any likely additional costs associated with the programme and information about the bursary arrangements.

Reason: In the documentation provided, the visitors noted information regarding fees and criminal record checks, via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The visitors highlighted that from September 2013 bursary arrangements for social work students had changed. The visitors were unable to determine from the documentation if information around the new bursary will be communicated to potential applicants and students. In a meeting with the programme team it was stated that there was intent to speak with new applicants regarding bursaries and that current first year students had been updated, however no formal process was in place. The visitors were also unable to find evidence of information about the costs for criminal record checks. During discussions with the students it was evident that one student had been required to pay for the criminal record check and two had not. The programme team presented correspondence that was sent to all applicants advising them of the requirement to self-fund a criminal records check through the DBS, however, this was sent after a place had been offered and accepted. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants before applying so they can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a programme. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, including advertising materials to ensure this information is included, along with information about bursaries. In this way the visitors can be sure that potential applicants and students are made aware of any likely additional costs associated with the programme and information about new bursary arrangements.

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 programme admissions documentation to ensure consistency in the information provided to both potential applicants and internal staff.

Reason: Throughout the documentation the visitors noted a number of inconsistencies in the required UCAS points. For example students are advised: "Applicants will normally need to achieve a minimum of 260 UCAS points..." Course Specification, page 10. This contradicts the recruitment process which states "Social work requires applicants to have or be in line to achieve; 3 'A' Levels or equivalent 280 UCAS points..." Recruitment process for social work, page 1. In a meeting with the programme team, the visitors were advised that the UCAS requirement was previously 280 but had since been reviewed and changed to 260 points. The visitors therefore require the programme team to update all programme documentation to provide consistency with the new UCAS requirements.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to ensure terminology used is accurate and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: In the documentation provided it states that; “The course is accredited by the following professional body/ies The HCPC...” BA Social Work Course Guide, page 12. This is incorrect as the HCPC do not accredit programmes, we approve them. It was also noted that there were references to the previous regulatory body, the General Social Care Council (GSCC). For example students are directed to a web link for the GSCC suitability document; “Other Associated Policies & Codes of Conduct: ...The General Social Care Council (Suitability for Social Work)...”. Fitness to practice procedure policy, page 6. This reference to the previous regulatory body could be misleading to students as the social work profession (in England) came onto the HCPC Register on 1 August 2012. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for applicants and students.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the formal protocols in place for gaining students informed consent prior to them partaking in role play sessions, along with information informing them of their right to confidentiality.

Reason: Through discussion with the students and programme team, the visitors noted that consent from students when participating as service users in practical teaching was discussed with students verbally at the beginning of the programme. In a meeting with the students, however, it was evident that they had not been given the opportunity to “opt out” of role play activities. The visitors were shown a copy of the education provider’s consent form which outlined provisions for gaining students consent to be photographed and / or filmed. However, the visitors were not presented with evidence of clear protocols to demonstrate that a formal system is in place for explicitly gaining students’ informed consent before they participate as service users in practical teaching. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence of formal protocols for obtaining and recording consent from students, and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical teaching.

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 clearly specify in assessment regulations the 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.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. The visitors were happy that the current external examiners are appropriate for the programme. However, this standard requires that the assessment regulations of the programme state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered, or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed with the HCPC. Therefore the visitors require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiners to the programme are included in the assessment regulations, to ensure that this standard is met.

Michael Branicki
Gary Dicken
Joanna Jackson