

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Worcester
Name of programme(s)	MA in Social Work, Full time
Approval visit date	21 February 2018
Case reference	CAS-11000-J9S5T3

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### Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as ‘our standards’). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

## Section 1: Our regulatory approach

### Our standards

We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

### How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### HCPC panel

We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Mohammed Jeewa	Lay
Cathrine Clarke	Social worker
Anne Mackay	Social worker
Niall Gooch	HCPC executive

### Other groups involved in the approval visit

There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Marie Stowell	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of Worcester
Sara Gibbon	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Worcester
Steve Wood	Internal panel member	University of Derby – external member
Claire Wolfe	Internal panel member	University of Worcester

Charlie Russell	Internal panel member	University of Worcester – learner member
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## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	MA in Social Work
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Social worker in England
First intake	01 November 2007
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01648

We undertook this assessment via the approval process, which involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme continues to meet our standards. We decided to assess the programme via the approval process due to the outcome of a previous assessment. A change notification was submitted by the education provider regarding changes to the curriculum, and a decision was made that the changes were large enough that a visit was required.

## Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted
Programme specification	Yes
Module descriptor(s)	Yes
Handbook for learners	Yes
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Met</b>
Learners	Yes
Senior staff	Yes
Practice education providers	Yes
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes
Programme team	Yes
Facilities and resources	Yes

## Section 4: Outcome from first review

### **Recommendation of the visitors**

In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

### **Conditions**

Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 27 April 2018

#### **4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that learning with and from others on the programme is integrated into the curriculum, and how they have decided what other professions and learners are most relevant to their programme.

**Reason:** The visitors reviewed the module descriptors offered as evidence by the education provider, which laid out the education provider's plans to teach learners about how other health and care professions worked. They were aware from the documentary submission and from discussions with the programme team that there will be a "jointly delivered session" in which learners could "explore collaborative working" with physiotherapy and occupational therapy learners. However, the visitors could not see that learning about other professions and how they could work collaboratively met the standard, as learners would not be learning with and from the other professionals or learners. In discussions with visitors some existing learners said that they thought more inter-professional learning would be good. The visitors were also not clear that the single session with occupational therapists and physiotherapists would ensure that

learners were learning with and from professionals in other relevant professions. They could not see how the education provider had made decisions about which other professions were most appropriate, and how they had designed and would deliver inter-professional learning (IPL) to ensure relevance to this particular programme. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing the rationale for their IPL strategy, which is relevant to the programme, and how learning from and with other professionals and learners will be appropriately integrated into the curriculum.

#### **4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate that there is an appropriate process in place for monitoring attendance of mandatory components of the programme, and ensuring that appropriate action is taken if learners do not attend.

**Reason:** The visitors reviewed attendance policies highlighted in the SETs mapping document. They noted that in the course handbook the education provider had identified and communicated where attendance is mandatory. However, they were not clear from this evidence, or from discussions with learners and the programme team, that a process was in place to monitor attendance, or what the next steps for action would be if learners had issues with attendance. In particular the learners did not seem to be aware of the follow-up process and / or sanctions if their attendance fell below the required level. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence showing that a monitoring process is in place for attendance on the mandatory parts of the programme. Additionally, the education provider must provide evidence to show how learners are made aware of any consequences associated with not meeting the mandatory attendance requirement.

#### **Recommendations**

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

#### **3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should keep under review its process for ensuring that actions resulting from the implementation and monitoring of equality and diversity policies are appropriately communicated.

**Reason:** In their review of the Course Committee minutes from November 2017, the visitors noted that learners on that committee had mentioned that some learners from ethnic minority backgrounds were having difficulties on the programme. In discussions with the learners the visitors were made aware of concerns about learners with English as a second language (E2L) being disadvantaged in assessment. The programme team stated to the visitors that they were aware of these issues and were taking steps to address them. The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met at threshold, as there are equality and diversity policies in place that are monitored and action is taken when issues arise. There were not any major concerns among learners about equality

and diversity issues. However, the specific responses by the programme team to the issues mentioned above did not appear to have been communicated to learners. The visitors therefore suggest that the education provider should ensure that actions taken in response to learner input are communicated to learners, to maintain confidence in the equality and diversity policies and their implementation.

#### **6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.**

**Recommendation:** The education provider should keep under review the appropriateness of the chosen assessment method in the module SOWK4105 Practice Developing Capacity.

**Reason:** The visitors reviewed evidence relating to the new and amended modules on the programme. They noted that in the module SOWK4105, Practice Developing Capacity, the education provider had decided to assess learners' reflective practice through an entirely verbal test, with no written component. The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met at threshold, as they considered that an entirely verbal test could adequately assess reflective practice if administered appropriately. From discussions, they were aware that the programme team had carefully considered how best to assess reflective practice. However, as it is unusual to assess reflective practice in this way, the visitors suggest that the education provider keep under review how well the assessment is working.

### **Section 5: Visitors' recommendation**

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 24 May 2018 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).