

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Chester
Programme name	MA Applied Mental Health Practice
Mode of delivery	Work based learning
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	13 – 14 May 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 a protected title 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.

As well as approving educational programmes for people who want to join the Register or have an annotation on their Registration record, the HCPC also approve a small number of programmes which are not linked to HCPC Registration. These programmes are for the profession of approved mental health practitioners (AMHPs) (for social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists).

The HCPC criteria for approving AMHP programmes set out the systems and processes an education provider is expected to have in place to deliver an AMHP programme, as well as the competencies professionals must achieve on completing the programme.

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 24 August 2014. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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

When the regulation of social workers in England transferred from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to ourselves, we took responsibility for approving AMHP programmes in England. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) gives us powers to set criteria for approving AMHP programmes. A decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing AMHP programmes. This visit is to assess the programmes against the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals.

This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programmes at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the 'PG Dip Applied Mental Health Practice' and 'PG Cert Applied Mental Health Practice'. Separate reports exist for these programmes.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and visitor role	Sheila Skelton (Approved mental health professional) Dorothy Smith (Approved mental health professional)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	20 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Jane Martin (University of Chester)
Secretary	Roger Whitely (University of Chester)

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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

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)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 49 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining one criterion.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain criteria have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the criterion 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 criterion has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

B.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence that the resources to support students throughout the programme provide accurate and consistent information, particularly around the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted a number of inaccuracies in the programme documentation. The University of Chester & Cheshire AMHP partnership: Co-Operation Agreement makes several references to the General Social Care Council (GSCC) including; “The Programme is validated by the University and satisfies General Social Care Council (GSCC)...” (page 2).. And “The partners: will make the necessary arrangements for the supervised practice element for their own employees, in accordance with the requirements of the GSCC and validated by the University” (page 3). The GSCC no longer regulate the social work profession. As such the documentation should be amended to accurately reflect the current status of social work regulation. The visitors also noted that page two of the Applied Mental Health Practice programme Specification states that the programme is accredited by the HCPC. The HCPC does not accredit programmes, we approve them. In addition to this the same document references HCPC with its former name HPC. To be satisfied this criterion is met, the visitors require the programme documentation to be revised to ensure that details of the programme and references to the HCPC are consistent and accurate throughout.

Sheila Skelton
Dorothy Smith