

Education quality assurance – Course change review report

Report date:

18/01/2021

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Documentary review details

Inspection ID	YOR374
Course provider	University of York
Validating body (if different)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Course name	MA Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Proposed first intake	01/09/2020
Maximum student cohort	35
Review type	Course change
Review team	Lainy Russell (Lay Inspector) Michael Branicki (Registrant Inspector)
Review team recommendation	Approval
Outcome	Approved

About the review

The proposed changes by the university involve a temporary increase in their maximum student cohort for the MA Social Work, from 20 to 35 students. This adjustment reflects additional, unplanned recruitment to the course for academic year 2020/2021, which occurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The education provider has advised at this stage that the increase in student numbers is not intended to be permanent and that they anticipate recruitment will return to normal in 2021/2022.

Social Work England has considered several temporary adjustments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as adjustments to placement days or student numbers, outside of our course change process. However, as the education provider had expressed concern about placement capacity and the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, it was deemed appropriate to appoint inspectors to review the change against our education and training standards.

The university has provided evidence in support of this change request which has been reviewed by the allocated inspectors.

Findings

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider;

- Initial concerns about placement capacity, including the duration and range of practice-based learning, appear to have been resolved in relation to this cohort. The education provider has supplied documentary evidence detailing the number of placements available and assuring inspectors that there will be a sufficient number of qualified Practice Educators in place to support students on placement. The education provider expects that all students will have a first placement totalling 70 days and a final placement totalling 100 days, in two contrasting settings.
- In order to achieve this, the education provider invested in additional staff resource (a new Placement Coordination Support role) which enabled them to source and agree a sufficient number of placements with employers. Documentary evidence was provided demonstrating engagement between the education provider and employers, including meeting minutes and e-mails, discussing placement provision for the current cohort. Inspectors felt that this provided evidence of pro-active partnerships and a working relationship with placement providers.
- The education provider has also opted to stagger placement start dates by splitting the MA cohort, an adjustment which has proved effective for education providers managing the impact of COVID-19 on placement availability in their local areas.
- From the documentary evidence provided, inspectors believe that this adjustment in student numbers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be accommodated by the education provider for academic year 2020/2021. However, any future permanent

increase in student numbers would need to be considered separately from this temporary adjustment.

Conclusions

The inspectors are recommending approval.

Appendix 1 – Outcome by standard

Standards impacted by the change	Met	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
Course Governance, Management and Leadership	☒	☐	☐
3.1 The course will be sustainable and fit for purpose.	☒	☐	☐
3.5 There will be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and placement providers.	☒	☐	☐
3.6 There will be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice based learning for all students.	☒	☐	☐
3.9 There will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective course.	☒	☐	☐
Practice Based Learning	☒	☐	☐
5.1 Practice based learning will be integral to the course.	☒	☐	☐
5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice based learning will support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 The education provider will maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice based learning.	☒	☐	☐
5.4 Practice based learning will take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for students and people with lived experience of social work.	☒	☐	☐
5.5 There will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice based learning.	☒	☐	☐
5.6 Practice educators will have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, will be on the register.	☒	☐	☒
5.7 Practice educators will undertake regular training, which is appropriate to their role, students' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the course.	☒	☐	☐
5.8 Students and practice educators will have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice based learning.	☒	☐	☐