

Education quality assurance – Course change review report

Report date: 27th August 2024

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Documentary review details

Inspection ID	UHUL_1639
Course provider	University of Hull
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course name	MA social work
Mode of study	Full time
Proposed first intake	01/09/2024
Maximum student cohort	Click or tap here to enter text.
Review type	Course change
Review team	Anne Mackay – Registrant Inspector Pricilla McGuire – Lay Inspector Laura Gordon – EQA Officer
Review team recommendation	Approved
Regulator decision	Approved

About the review

The University of Hull are proposing to make the following changes to the MA social work course as part of their curriculum development and enhancement:

- A change from programme learning outcomes to programme competencies as part of their Transforming Programme Curriculum Enhancement to achieve clearer alignment with the Social Work England professional standards.

- Changes to the structure of the programme in Year 2 by bringing forward the dissertation and last placement module meaning the programme is shorter by approximately 5 months.
- A revised assessment strategy to strengthen the assessment of vocational/practice skills and reduce the overall assessment burden on students.

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

Findings

The university identified 6 standards that would be impacted by the changes they wanted to implement. After reviewing the evidence submitted, the inspectors identified the following:

1. For all standards, with the exception of standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8 and 4.9 the university showed there was a continuation of their ability to meet the education and training standards.
2. Standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8 and 4.9 were directly impacted by the proposed change and required evidence to satisfy the inspectors that the university would continue to meet the standards. They related to provision of the curriculum and assessment.

Supporting evidence was submitted for the relevant standards to show how the university will manage the proposed changes. The university provided copies of the updated assessment strategy, programme and module specifications, a programme map, assessment policy and consultation evidence.

The inspection team's review of each of the impacted standards is outlined below.

Standard 4.1

The university provided a clear rationale for the changes. The changes from learning outcomes to programme competencies have been introduced as part of a university wide curriculum development and enhancement strategy called Transforming Programmes. The University developed a competence-based education framework to enable them to provide distinctive and effective education and learning experiences.

The competencies replace the existing programme learning outcomes and are more explicitly focused on vocational knowledge and skills to focus on the Social Work England professional standards at programme and module level.

The changes to the MA Social Work programme structure are being introduced in response to a fall in admissions numbers and the shortening of the programme was highlighted as attractive during consultation.

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider that this standard is met.

Standard 4.2

Employers, practitioners and people with lived experience were consulted regarding changes to the curriculum. Further documentation was provided of the consultations with relevant stakeholders.

The employer consultation indicated that the programme was 'assessment heavy' and welcomed changes to streamline and diversify assessments, alongside a positive response to a shorter programme. This feedback aligned with the people with lived experience consultation that highlighted a need for students to rehearse/practice certain elements more, which resulted in the introduction of practice simulation exercises considering multi agency roles.

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider that this standard is met.

Standard 4.3

The programme redesign has included a renewed focus on inclusion, diversity and equality at programme and module level, shaped by the University of Hull's Inclusive Education Framework.

The updated programme is underpinned by principles of social justice, equality, diversity and inclusion, community and belonging. Examples were provided of consideration given to students with caring responsibilities when timetabling the course.

Evidence was provided of the consideration of inclusion in the review of teaching, learning and assessment on every module. The university advised that reading materials, content of taught lectures and assessments have been updated to ensure they represent diverse perspectives.

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider that this standard is met.

Standard 4.4

The introduction of the competency framework has enabled every module specification to be updated in line with research and current practice developments.

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider that this standard is met.

Standard 4.8

The assessment strategy has been revised to strengthen the assessment of vocational/practice skills and the application of subject knowledge. It also aims to reduce the overall assessment burden on students. The rationale was to achieve more effective alignment to authentic social work practice, the programme competencies, professional standards and pedagogical approaches.

The two modules where the assessment strategy has changed are 'Children and Families' and 'Specialisms in Practice'. Further documentation confirmed how students will be supported and prepared for the professional discussion assessment.

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider that this standard is met.

Standard 4.9

The structure of the programme in year two has been changed which impacts on the submission dates for assessments, but the sequencing of assessments remains unchanged. The start point of the last placement module has been brought forward, meaning the programme is shorter by approximately 5 months. The university advised that this would result in a benefit to students in terms of accessibility and financial constraints.

The assessment map for the programme outlines the sequencing and ordering of assessments across the programme.

The inspectors have reviewed the documentary evidence and consider that this standard is met.

Conclusions

The inspectors are recommending approval of the course changes.

Regulator decision

Approved.