

Education quality assurance – Course change review report

Report date:

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Documentary review details

Inspection ID	UCL1201
Course provider	University of Central Lancashire
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course name	MA Social Work CPP419 Pg Dip Social Work (exit route only) CPP420
Mode of study	Full time
Proposed first intake	01/09/2023
Maximum student cohort	65
Review type	New approval
Review team	Kevin Stone, Glenn Mathieson
Review team recommendation	Approved
Regulator decision	Approved
Date of regulator decision	01/09/2023

About the review

The University of Central Lancashire was inspected 9th August 2022 to 12th August 2022 as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021. This inspection included reapproval of the MA Social Work CP177 and the Pg Dip Social Work (exit route) CP179. Both courses were approved with conditions, the regulator decision was given 10 January 2023.

The University of Central Lancashire are now making changes to the courses which will require the current students to complete their studies on the existing version of the course which will be taught out. The university plan to recruit to the updated MA Social Work from September

2023. They will therefore require approval of the updated versions of the MA Social Work CPP419 and the Pg Dip Social Work (exit route) CPP420.

It was agreed with the regulator that approval of the updated versions of the course could be considered via a documentary review given the recent reapproval inspection. The lay inspector from the original inspection team was part of the documentary review team. This documentary review only considered the standards that would be impacted by the changes being introduced.

Findings

1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.

The inspectors reviewed the 'Revised MA Social Work Pre-Entry Sway' which they felt was very clear and informative to potential applicants.

Whilst the 'Revised MA Social Work web page' is informative to potential applicants and contains the revised module information, including the new placement configuration, the inspectors felt that there could be further clarification around the 30 skills days, as it is not currently obvious for applicants how the 200 days placement is made up.

The inspection agreed that this standard is met but would recommend that the university enhance the website information to include information about how skills day make up the required 200 days placement.

2.1 Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings.

Each student will have:

- placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and
- a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.

The Practice Learning Guidance and MA Social Work Course Information Guide have been updated to reflect change from 80 to 70 days for first placement and the corresponding change from 20 to 30 skills days. The MA Social Work Skills Days Table outlines the details of the 30 skills days across the two year programme.

The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.

The inspectors reviewed the evidence contained within Practice Learning Guidance, Practice Learning Agreement and MA Year 1 E-Portfolio template. There has been little change except what has been needed to rebalance the placement days with the skills days.

The inspectors were satisfied that this standard is met.

4.1 Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.

The inspectors reviewed the evidence contained within Programme specification, MA Social Work Course Information Guide, Module Descriptors: SW4912, SW4907, SW4908 and SW4910. The university also provided an additional table to summarise the changes for each module and the reason for that change.

The inspectors felt that the evidence was clear and agreed the standard was met.

4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.

The inspectors reviewed the evidence contained within Practice Learning Guidance and MA Social Work Course Information Guide. They felt there has been very little fundamental change to how this standard is met based upon the previous inspection. Additional evidence provided demonstrated continued engagement with the Comensus Group (Community Engagement and Service User Support) and local partners and their involvement in the changes.

The inspectors are satisfied that this standard is met.

4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.

The inspectors felt that the changes to the modules did not impact on this standard and agreed this standard continues to be met.

4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.

Whilst the initial drive for change to these courses was instigated by the University's requirements around modular credit weighting, the postgraduate course team have used the University's Curriculum Framework review process to re-evaluate the programme, to consider how the course continues to be fit for purpose and adopts best practice principles which resulted in the module changes being introduced.

The inspectors agreed that this standard continues to be met.

4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.

The previous inspection demonstrated that this standard was met. The new Research Informed Social Work module includes requirements for students to consider the evidence they need for

practice, and the other modules have additional teaching time which is hoped will provide students with further opportunities to integrate theory and practice.

The inspectors agreed this standard is met.

4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.

Whilst there is no real change for this standard, the Complexities in Social Work module will allow for the development of further IPE activities within the delivery, the module leader is looking at potential collaboration with colleagues in policing/justice programmes. The inspectors reviewed the evidence including student feedback on an event 'Frailty Friday' and agreed this standard continues to be met.

4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.

This is the only change relating to this standard is the change in the number of placement days for the first placement from 80 to 70 days. The inspectors reviewed the evidence contained within the module descriptor SW4912 Social Work Practice: Experience 1 and agreed this standard is met.

4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

Assessment changes have been made in line with University's Academic Regulations & guidance regarding assessment weighting and principles. The inspectors considered the evidence contained within Assessment Strategy (updated), Module Descriptors: SW4902, SW4907, SW4908, SW4911 and agreed this standard is met.

4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.

The inspectors reviewed the assessment changes evidenced in the Assessment Strategy (updated), Module Descriptors: SW4902, SW4907; SW4908; SW4911. The changes to module SW4908 have removed the requirement to meet the same learning outcomes in both assessments.

The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.

The dissertation has been removed and a new Research Informed Social Work module (SW4911) introduced. Evidence reviewed in the module descriptors demonstrated that this and other modules enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach.

The inspectors agreed this standard is met.

5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.

Changes to the course do not impact on how this standard is currently being met.

However, the university are introducing changes to the personal tutor scheme to enhance pastoral support for students. The Personal Tutor will now be allocated when students first start the course and follow the student through the duration of their course, rather than change each year. The personal tutor is an academic member of staff with a pastoral role who will provide academic support and signpost to other support services if required.

The inspectors agreed that this standard continues to be met.

Conclusions

In reviewing the changes proposed by the university, the inspectors are recommending approval of this course.

Regulator decision

Approved