

HCPC approval process report

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| Education provider | University of Wolverhampton |
| Name of programme(s) | BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship, Work based learning |
| Approval visit date | 11 - 12 June 2019 |
| Case reference | CAS-14502-J1G0F6 |

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Section 1: Our regulatory approach..... | 2 |
| Section 2: Programme details..... | 3 |
| Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment..... | 3 |
| Section 4: Outcome from first review..... | 4 |
| Section 5: Visitors' recommendation..... | 4 |

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:

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|----------------|---|
| Louise Towse | Lay |
| Anne Gribbens | Social worker |
| Gary Dicken | Social worker (Approved mental health professional) |
| Patrick Armsby | 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.

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Ruth Shiner | Independent chair (supplied by the education provider) | University of Wolverhampton – Associate Dean, Faculty of Science and Engineering |
| Julie Heydon | Secretary (supplied by the education provider) | University of Wolverhampton – Faculty Quality Administrator |
| Christopher Midgley | University Panel Member - External Advisor | Edge Hill University |

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|--------------|-------------------------|---|
| Tracy McCoy | University Panel Member | University of Wolverhampton – Head of Quality and Partnership, Faculty of Arts |
| Maggie Jones | University Panel Member | University of Wolverhampton – Faculty Quality Officer, Quality and Collaborative Unit |

Section 2: Programme details

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Programme name | BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship |
| Mode of study | WBL (Work based learning) |
| Profession | Social worker in England |
| First intake | 1/9/2019 |
| Maximum learner cohort | Up to 20 |
| Intakes per year | 1 |
| Assessment reference | APP02089 |

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.

The education provider informed the HCPC that they intend to introduce a Degree Apprenticeship programme in social work, in addition to the BA (Hons) Social Work programme that is currently approved via the major change process. The education provider highlighted that a range of modules will be designed and developed for the new programme, and mentioned the opportunities for curriculum development. The education provider confirmed via email that this will be a new award and that the programme will be different to the current BA (Hons) Social Work.

Following the submission of a major change notification form the degree apprenticeship programme will be different from the current programme in a number of ways, such as new modules, an End Point Assessment, and that the programme will be following a work-based learning model. To consider how this new programme meets the standards of education and training, it was appropriate we review a documentary submission as well as meet with various stakeholders involved in the programme to triangulate the views of various groups, to determine whether the SETs are met. The approval visit was the most appropriate way to review this change.

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 | Not Required |

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

| Group | Met | Comments |
|---|-----|--|
| Learners | Yes | The panel met with learners from the existing BA (Hons) Social Work programme that is HCPC approved. |
| 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

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.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider strengthening how they ensure learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: The visitors noted from the meeting with the programme team that there was limited availability for interprofessional learning with other learners. The visitors felt the standard was met at a threshold level, as there will be careers week for relevant learners to interact with one another during the first year of the course. However, the education provider did not confirm if this was to be repeated in future years. Therefore, the visitors observed there could be a potential for the programme to not meet the SETs in the future. Visitors recommend the education provider ensures interprofessional learning opportunities are available for learners, specifically the opportunity to learn with and from learners in other relevant professions.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

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 is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met, and that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 22 August 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).