hcpc health & care professions council

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of South Wales
Name of programme(s)	Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, Full time
	Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, Part time
Approval visit date	15-16 March 2018
Case reference	CAS-12246-F7V4G8

Contents

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:

David Packwood	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
Deirdre Keane	Lay
Jai Shree Adhyaru	Practitioner psychologist - Counselling psychologist
Shaista Ahmad	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.

Diane O'Sullivan	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of South Wales
Rachael Farmer	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of South Wales
Sue Whitcombe	BPS Representative	British Psychological Society
Helen Nicholas	BPS Representative	British Psychological Society
Susan Quinn	BPS Representative	British Psychological Society

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Practitioner psychologist
Modality	Counselling psychologist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 15
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01822

Programme name	Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Profession	Practitioner psychologist
Modality	Counselling psychologist
Proposed First intake	01 September 2018
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 15
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01823

We undertook an assessment of a new part time and full time programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programmes meet our standards for the first time.

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

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

Group	Met
Learners	Yes
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

Recommendation of the visitors
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 was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 11 May 2018.

2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that appropriate information about the programme is provided to potential applicants, to ensure that they can make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the education provider requires the applicant to have a confirmed placement before they can take up a place on the programme. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors heard that this was not a requirement of the programme and the education provider intends to support potential applicants in finding a placement, if necessary. Therefore, the visitors require further clarification as to what information is available to potential applicants. In this way, the visitors will be able to determine how prospective applicants are able to make an informed choice about whether to apply for a place on the programme.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they plan to monitor, evaluate and support service user and carer involvement in the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that the education provider planned to involve service users and carers through a steering group where they can explore issues, relevant to the course. At the visit, the visitors met with representatives from the Mental Health Service User Involvement Project (MHSUI). During discussions, the visitors learned that the steering group meeting with service users was not due to take place until April 2018. The visitors considered that as this had not taken place, and as they did not see a terms of reference for this group, it was difficult to determine the full involvement of service users within the programme. The service users explained that they received extensive amounts of information about the steering group. However, the visitors considered that the information provided was not appropriate in explaining what to expect as a member of the steering group, or the support available to them including aspects such as claiming travel expenses. Additionally, as there was no information provided about how the education provider plans to implement, monitor and evaluate service user feedback into the programme the visitors were unable to determine how this standard is met. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence demonstrating that the education provider will implement, monitor and evaluate the continued involvement of service users and carers in the programme.

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors learned the education provider is in the process of recruiting a placement officer who would be able to oversee the setting up of all the trainee's practice-based learning and would be the main contact regarding practice-based learning. In discussions with the programme team, the visitors learned that they are proposing the placement officer to be in place by August 2018. However, the recruitment plans have not been finalised, and the job description is yet to be drafted. As there are, only a small number of teaching staff involved in the programme, the visitors considered that this is an essential administrative role, and that therefore it is paramount that recruitment plans are in place. The visitors considered that if for any reason this recruitment did not happen, there would be implications for the programme, including a strain on staff resources, and on learners being able to source their own placement. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the education provider has plans in place to recruit to this role, thus ensuring there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the formal process in place for obtaining appropriate consent from learners is effective.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, the visitors noted that the process for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and carers was contained within the placement handbook. The education provider did not provide any information regarding

this standard in relation to learners. As such, the visitors did not see evidence of the formal protocols to obtain consent from learners. As such, the visitors were unclear, for example, how the education provider manages situations where learners decline from participating as service users in practical sessions. To ensure this standard is met, the visitors require evidence:

- of the formal protocols for obtaining consent from learners, including how records are maintained;
- to demonstrate how learners are informed about the requirement for them to participate,
- to show what alternative learning arrangements will be put in place where learners do not consent to participating as a service user.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure that practice educators undertake regular training, which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, the visitors were unable to determine what training would be available for practice educators and when this training would be provided as this information was not available within the programme documentation. At the visit, during the programme team meeting the visitors learned that the education provider would hold a 'supervisor forum' twice a year to help practice educators become familiar of what their role requires. However, it is not clear what criteria the education provider will use in determining what training is required of practice-based learning staff, for example, when initial training would need to be completed, how frequently refresher training would need to be completed, or about the content of this training. Therefore, the visitors require evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that all practice educators undertake regular training, which is appropriate to their role, the learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes.

Section 5: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 05 July 2018 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available on our website.