

Course provider: Teesside University

Course approval: MA Social Work
PgDip Social Work (exit route only)

Report date:	12/01/2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	08/02/2022
Date conditions met and approved:	13/06/2022

Contents

Introduction	3
What we do.....	3
Summary	5
Language	5
Inspection.....	6
Meetings with students	6
Meetings with course staff.....	6
Meeting with people with lived experience of social work	6
Meetings with external stakeholders.....	6
Findings	7
Standard one: Admissions.....	7
Standard two: Learning environment	9
Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....	12
Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....	15
Standard five: Supporting students	18
Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register	20
Proposed outcome.....	22
Conditions	22
Recommendations	22
Annex 1: Education and training standards summary.....	24
Regulator decision	31
Annex 2: Meeting of conditions.....	31
Findings	32

Introduction

1. Social Work England completes inspections as part of our statutory requirement to approve and monitor courses. Inspections form part of our process to make sure that courses meet our [education and training standards](#) and ensure that students successfully completing these courses can meet our [professional standards](#).
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. One inspector is a social worker registered with us and the other is not a registered social worker (a 'lay' inspector). These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review information and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, placement provision, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, training placement providers, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
3. The process we undertake is described in our legislation; the Social Worker Regulations 2018¹, and the Social Work England [\(Education and Training\) Rules 2019](#).
4. You can find further guidance on our course change, approval and annual monitoring processes on our website.

What we do

5. When an education provider wants to make a change to a course, or request the approval of a new course, they are asked to consider how their course meets our education and training standards and our professional standards, and provide evidence of this to us. We are also undertaking a cycle of re-approval of all currently approved social work courses in England following the introduction of the Education and Training Standards 2021.
6. The education quality assurance officer reviews all the documentary evidence provided and will contact the education provider if they have any questions about the information submitted. They also provide advice and guidance on our approval processes.
7. When we are satisfied that we have all the documentary evidence required to proceed with an inspection we assign one registrant and one lay inspector. We undertake a conflict of interest process when confirming our inspectors to ensure there is no bias or perception of bias in the approval process.
8. The inspectors complete an assessment of the evidence provided and advise the officer if they have any queries that may be able to be addressed in advance of the inspection.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111170090/contents>

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a two to three-day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, inspections are currently being carried out via remote virtual arrangements, and typically last three to four days.
11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved we may also decide to withdraw approval.
12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final regulatory decision about the approval of the course.
13. The final decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.
14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary

Inspection findings from Teesside University course approval

15. Teesside University's MA Social Work programme was inspected 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.

Inspection ID	TUR1
Course provider	Teesside University
Validating body (if different)	n/a
Course inspected	MA Social Work PgDip Social Work – exit route only
Date of inspection	30/11/21 - 03/12/21
Mode of study	Full Time
Proposed first intake	n/a
Maximum student cohort	25
Inspection team	Naomi Barrett Education Quality Assurance Officer Bradley Allen (Lay Inspector) Louise Robson (Registrant Inspector) Helen Challis Education Quality Assurance Officer
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe Teesside University as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the MA Social Work as 'the course'

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 30th November 2021 to 3rd December 2021. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

18. These meetings formed the basis of the inspection plan, agreed with the education provider ahead of inspection. The following section provides a summary of these sessions, who participated and the topics that were discussed with the inspection team.

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with five MA Social Work students, currently in their second and final year of study at Teesside University. Discussions included students' experience of applying for the course, their overall experience of the courses, teaching and learning, preparation for placement, student support services, awareness of the regulatory body and the resourcing of their course.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, central support teams and senior staff members in the Social Sciences, Humanities and Law Department.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the design and delivery of the course and interview process. The team also met with a guest speaker and also representatives from the Lawnmower Theatre Group who also work with the course team and students.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Stockton on Tees Borough Council, Change Grow Live and Sanctuary Supported Living. At a later meeting the inspection team also met with independent Practice Educators who engage with Teesside MA students as placement supervisors.

Findings

24. In this section we set out the inspectors' findings in relation to whether the education provider has demonstrated that it meets the education and training standards and that the course will ensure that students who successfully complete the course are able to meet the professional standards.

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The university provided documentary evidence relating to selection, interview questions and scoring and the wider university support mechanisms related to these processes which was reviewed by the inspection team. The inspection team through meetings with admissions, course team, people with lived experience of social work and placement partners were satisfied that the university had a holistic approach to entry on to the course. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

26. Teesside University does not set prior experience as an entry requirement, but they were able to demonstrate how applicants are given the opportunity to include prior experience in the application process. This was further evidenced in the interview questions which are designed to capture relevant experience. Therefore, the inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

27. The inspection team met with two people with lived experience of social work who had been involved in the selection process at Teesside; this included engaging in reviewing written tasks and interviewing candidates. Members from the placement partner meeting and practice educator meeting also confirmed to the inspection team their involvement in the admissions process.

28. The inspection team also spoke with students who were able to reflect on their experience of engaging with people with lived experience of social work and other external interview panel members as part of their application and interview experience. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

29. Teesside University demonstrated the process to assess suitability of applicant's character, conduct and health through evidence submitted and during the inspection

meetings. This included support available during the process for applicants who may have particular health or learning needs. The inspection team also discussed in more detail the documentary evidence submitted regarding the suitability panels. These panels are used to assess particular concerns or raised issues around an applicant's suitability and are made up of both university staff but also external stakeholders, usually from practice placement settings.

30. When asked about timescales relating to the suitability panels, the inspection team were told that currently there are no specified timescales. This is due to the university being unable to guarantee the availability of panel members particularly those from external stakeholders. The delay in getting the panels set up can mean that they will not be completed in time to enable the applicant to enrol onto the course and therefore the university will encourage the applicant to defer to the following year.

31. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met and the university are carefully assessing applicant's suitability. However, having no clear timescales for suitability panels has the potential to mean that applicants may be treated differently in that some will have their panel in time to start their course, should the panel find in their favour, and others not and being encouraged to defer a year before they are even told if they would be able to continue on the course. Therefore, the inspection team recommend that the university look at ensuring a more timebound and consistent approach to the panel process. Full details of the recommendation can be found in [the proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 1.5

32. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard prior to inspection did not fully explain how the university felt they met the standard. The inspection team also found that some policies, such as the admissions policy were out of date and they had not seen the updated version prior to inspection. The course team were able to provide updated documents during the inspection and also additional documents to demonstrate how they both gather and use information during the application process. The university website provides information around requirements for entry which includes health, DBS and suitability checks. Applicants can meet with both course and support staff during open days also to discuss any concerns in more detail also.

33. The inspection team met with support staff who specialise in areas such as student disability who confirmed that anything raised during an application would be picked up immediately and passed to the relevant team to ensure, wherever possible, support was already in place when the applicant enrolled and became a student. This included financial, learning and pastoral support.

34. When meeting with the students they confirmed to the inspection team that they had received individual support based on their needs and were happy that knew where they could go should any additional support be needed. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

35. As with standard 1.5 above, the university's website page for the MA Social Work course highlights entry requirements and additional information such as the DBS checks. It also references placement partners preference that applicants have a driver's licence, car and appropriate business insurance and that applicants can discuss this with the course team if they are unable to drive due to their personal circumstances. There is limited information as to why there are requirements and what support is available.

36. Course, module and placement information is available on the website as is information around bursary availability and course fees. Some information, such as students being able to claim a refund on DBS costs are also on the website, but this information is not on the front facing pages. Students would have to go through several links to get to it and is not so easy to navigate.

37. When the inspection team met with the students, they confirmed that they had all the information they needed to make an informed choice about taking a place up with Teesside but also said that they were unsure where to go to find certain information. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met but as some of the information had to be looked for rather than provided upfront the inspection team are recommending that the university considers expanding information on the website to provide more information in the initial course information page. Full details of the recommendation can be found in [the proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

38. The inspection team agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the course team and placement partners that all students would be able to access a suitable placement that would meet the requirements of this standard. However, the inspection team were not able to see where attendance requirements were specified. The attendance monitoring process is clear and the students confirmed to the inspection team they knew what was required of them in terms of reporting absence should they need to. The students were not clear what was mandatory to attend or what parts of the course they were able to retake should they fail modules.

39. Following a review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team discussed attendance with the course team. When the course team were asked about module resits and where students can find information about this the inspection team were pointed to the student and placement handbooks which link to the university policies. In both cases, the links go to the overarching policies which have caveats stating that not all modules can be retaken or that attendance depends on the course and to discuss with the course team. The information goes round in a loop and there is no definitive answer that can be found in any documentation.

40. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that two conditions are set against Standards 2.1, 5.5 and 5.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.2

41. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners and the university placement co-ordinator to discuss placement opportunities for students. The Inspection team heard of the types of placement on offer along with associated tasks. There was also a specific example given of adjustments made to a placement to ensure that the student had an appropriate caseload with enough relevant tasks to ensure the student would meet the learning outcomes.

42. The inspection team agreed it was evident that there are good working relationships with placement partners and students have appropriate and wide-ranging placement experiences. The students echoed this in their meeting with the inspection team and were happy with their experiences and reasonable adjustments that had been put in place where necessary. Therefore, these discussions, along with the documentary evidence reviewed, satisfied the inspection team that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

43. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included a Practice Learning Agreement and Multi-professional Educational Audit of Practice Placements document which covered the processes for induction, supervision and quality assurance processes. The inspection team were told how the processes were used by both course team and placement partners and how prior to placement a meeting would be held with the student, course staff, practice educator and placement partner to complete the practice learning

agreement. The inspection team were told that this had halted due to Covid-19 and was no longer in person.

44. Regarding support, students have the support of their Personal Tutor and Placement Co-ordinator from the university, who they can contact directly should they require additional advice or guidance whilst on placement. Students also told the inspection team of how any reasonable adjustments they needed was positively met by the placement provider who were able to implement them. The students said were happy with the support they had.

45. This was explored with Practice Educators who were able to provide examples of how they had supported students with reasonable adjustments or mitigating circumstances whilst on placement, speaking positively about their working relationship with the university course team to ensure this was carried out effectively. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

46. The inspection team discussed the documentary evidence and processes for auditing placements to determine the level of placement and matching of student to placement with the course team. The placement co-ordinator has the ongoing responsibility to ensure this is up to date and to ensure students are appropriately matched to Practice Educators and placements. Both the students and Practice Educators the inspection team met gave clear examples of these processes working effectively. The inspection team agreed that this standard was appropriately met.

Standard 2.5

47. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence provided in relation to students assessed preparation for practice, such as the Readiness for Practice Portfolio which must be completed successfully and ratified prior to the practice placement starting. An External Examiner report was also submitted which highlighted the module and portfolio as being particularly effective. Placement partners also specifically commented on how the Teesside MA students they work with are very well prepared to begin their placements. As a result, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

48. The Multi-professional Educational Audit of Practice Placements document reviewed by the inspection team undertakes checks of the practice partners employment methods to ensure that there are appropriately qualified Practice Educators in place. Where a placement partner is unable to adequately provide this information, the Placement Co-ordinator will identify an appropriately qualified offsite Practice Educator and suitable onsite supervisor. This process was discussed with Practice Educators and placement

partners with both confirming that these processes were working in practice. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

49. The Placement Handbook references the university's own whistleblowing and raising concerns processes but also clearly states that students can also use the policies of the practice placement to raise their concerns. The documents provided to the inspection team make it clear that students should not leave a placement without consultation with the university and going through the formal procedures.

50. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met however they felt that this area could be strengthened by including whistleblowing and raising concerns processes as part of the Practice Learning Agreement to ensure consistency. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

51. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted which included the course team C.Vs and information around the delivery of the course and module lead responsibilities. Discussions with the course team and senior management members also highlighted that there are plans for an additional three members of staff who would primarily work on the BA Social Work course but would have some cross over for additional resource for the MA Social work course.

52. The inspection team were satisfied that they could see a clear course governance structure and support available for the course team and were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

53. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted which included Placement Reference Group, Memorandum of Understandings and Social Work Placement Collaboration Agreement. These demonstrated to the inspection team the ways that the university works with placement providers to ensure they can provide education and training appropriately meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards.

54. Representatives from placement partners also detailed how their internal workforce development teams work to ensure they have multiple placement opportunities for students and contingency placements should they be needed. Therefore, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

55. The inspection team reviewed the Placement Handbook, Multi-professional Educational Audit of Practice Placements and Placement Collaboration Agreement all of which contain policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and what support is available for students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met however they also agreed that the placement handbook could be revised to include guidance that highlights the minimum expectations to ensure consistency across placement providers. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 3.4

56. The inspection team through the review of evidence alongside meetings held with practice placement partners were assured of working relationships between the university and placement providers. Placement partners are involved in the Placement Reference Group and some of the Practice Educators the inspection team met with also spoke of being involved in interviewing applicants and being asked to join the Course Steering Group. Both Practice educators and Placement Partners have been asked to be panel members of suitability panels to ensure a robust and fair suitability process. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

57. Documentation provided by the course team demonstrated how placement partners, students and people with lived experience of social work are engaged in monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems. This included the Course Steering Group which has representation from all stakeholders above.

58. The inspection team were also able to meet with each of those groups to hear how they are involved in practice and what impact they felt they had on evaluation and improvement. The feedback from each group was positive and included practical examples of changes made as a result of their feedback.

59. The inspection team also met with central university support staff involved in the internal quality management of university courses, to better understand the annual and ongoing audit/feedback mechanisms in place for both taught elements of the course and practice placements. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

60. As detailed above in standards 3.2 and 3.4 and associated evidence, the university clearly demonstrated how they work with placement partners around placement provision

with a defined strategy, teaching partnership collaboration and specific forecasting touch points to ensure each year has sufficient placement capacity. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

61. Prior to inspection the inspection team reviewed the course team C.Vs and a course structure identified the Course Leader and Module Leaders for the MA Social Work course. All are registered social workers.

62. It was evident from discussions with the Course Leader and team that they had recent and relevant knowledge of contemporary social work practice and had been supported by the university to maintain this knowledge and to grow relationships with key stakeholders such as employer partners and people with lived experience of social work. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

63. As with standard 3.7 above, the inspection team could see that the team is adequately resourced and supported by senior management. The inspection team were told of additional recruitment currently being undertaken for the BA Social work course but that there were plans to have those new members of staff teach across both courses which will enable more experience and specialism being shared and also as a contingency for the small MA Social work course team in the event of staff absences.

64. During a presentation from the course team at the start of the inspection the inspection team heard of some of the contemporary teaching and assessment methods used. When the inspection team met with students they also gave positive feedback about teaching and assessment methods and therefore the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

65. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Continuing Monitoring and Enhancement Process and Assessment Regulations which the inspection team reviewed. During the inspection, the course team were able to provide further evidence which included an updated Admissions Policy, Equality and Diversity Annual report and Enrolment Trends document that captured equality and diversity information of students over a three year period.

66. During discussions with the course team, the inspection team were told that the team use this information to identify anomalies which they can then investigate but as the course has had 100% completion rates for the last three years there had been no specific outcomes from this data. However, the course team did provide a specific example where one cohort had no male students within it which is unusual for the MA course and therefore the team

did do some exploratory work around why this may have been and did sense checks on their admissions processes to ensure they had been followed correctly. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

67. The inspection team were told by the course team that they are fully supported by the university to undertake CPD and Professional Practice with staff members given 25 days per year for scholarly activity. When meeting with senior staff members, which included the Dean of School for Education, Social Care and Social Sciences, the inspection team heard of the different budget allocations that staff can apply to for activities such as attending conferences. Research active members of staff can also apply to increase the 25 day allowance.

68. Anyone without teaching qualifications are given the opportunity to obtain a PGCE for teaching in higher education which is aligned to the UK Professional Standards for teaching. Completion of the course enables the person to obtain fellowship and can then work to senior fellowship and again, time will be provided for those undertaking these activities.

69. The course team also engage with the local teaching partnership, Social Work Education North East (SWENE) and the North East Social Work Alliance (NESWA) and with local and national Social Work forums. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

70. The inspection team reviewed the Course Handbook, Module Guides and Professional Standards PowerPoint documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection which shows how the course learning outcomes are mapped to Social Work England's Professional Standards, the Professional Capabilities Framework and BASW's Code of Ethics for Social Work.

71. Students are introduced to the Social Work England Professional Standards as part of their induction and undertake a review of their progress against those standards at the start of their second year. When meeting with the MA students they were clear on the importance of being able to meet the professional standards prior to practise and CPD requirements. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

72. As discussed in standard 1.3 regarding admissions and standard 3.5 regarding course monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems; the course team clearly demonstrated how placement partners, students and people with lived experience of social work are

engaged in the continuous review and development of the MA Social Work course as a whole.

73. The inspection team agreed this was an area of particular strength for the university having heard positive examples of the good working relationship the university has with each group of people from the representatives they met with. The inspection team were told that each group felt they had a genuine voice and made a real difference to the ongoing activities they were involved with. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

74. The inspection team, having reviewed the university's overarching equality, diversity and inclusion policies they were satisfied that the course had been designed in accordance with those policies and that the university had the necessary support mechanisms in place to ensure inclusion and reasonable adjustments in all settings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

75. From the documentary evidence provided within the Course Evaluation Document, the inspection team were able to discuss in detail with the course team, placement partners, Practice Educators and people with lived experience all the elements where they provide feedback about the course. The course team were then able to demonstrate how those processes fed into the course being regularly reviewed, where feedback is captured and action points created as a result. Therefore, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

76. Having reviewed the Course Evaluation Document, Course Specification and individual module descriptors the inspection team could track across the course how theory and practice would be explored. It was clear where theory and practice linked to assessment and the associated learning outcomes.

77. The inspection team discussed this in more detail with the course team having been shown some practical examples during an initial presentation by the course team around the student journey. The inspection team agreed that some of the teaching and assessment methods were a particular strength of the course and were satisfied this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

78. When meeting with senior management the inspection team were told of the long-term strategic plans to integrate cross learning opportunities within the Education, Social Care and Social Sciences school. Whilst this is in the very early stages, initial consultation has proved positive. The inspection team welcomed the opportunity to hear how the initial

consultation had been positive and how the university was exploring opportunities for developing multi professional working.

79. Currently, the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions is predominately presented through practice placement and skills days which students advised the inspection team was very useful and informative. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

80. The inspection team were able to review both the Course Specification and individual module descriptors detailing the course structure with the required hours along with the monitoring of attendance on campus and on placement information. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met

Standard 4.8

81. The inspection team reviewed documents in relation to assessment and progression and were given practical examples of how the range of different assessment methods would test different skills and competencies during a presentation by the course team. The module assessments are mapped against the curriculum, learning outcomes, PCF and relevant Social Work England standards. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

82. As with the standard above, 4.8, the inspection team have reviewed documents in relation to assessment and progression. The inspection team agreed that the evidence reviewed demonstrated that assessments are carried out at appropriate stages during the course and did not cause undue stress for students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

83. Feedback processes are aligned with the University Assessment and Feedback Policy which the inspection team reviewed along with External Examiner reports and the Course Evaluation Document. Students are provided with written feedback on all summative assessments which is made available via the Virtual Learning Environment. Students will also get verbal feedback on formative assessments which can include feedback from people with lived experience of social work. Students will also be given feedback as part of placement activity from supervisors and Practice Educators.

84. The inspection team discussed feedback and its effectiveness with students and were given positive examples of where feedback had helped them to develop their knowledge and skills. The students reported that this had led to better marks academically and an

improvement in their skillset. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

85. The education provider confirmed to the inspection team the external examiner name and linked to their profile at their own university showing their expertise. The inspection team have already reviewed the course team suitability in the standards above and confirmed their approval. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

86. The documentary evidence provided in relation to the Assessment and Progression Boards, Direct Observation of Practice documents and Placement Portfolios in addition to discussions with the course team, placement partners and the course central administration team assured the inspection team that there are systems to manage students' progression and this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

87. The inspection team concluded that evidence informed thinking and practice could be clearly demonstrated throughout the course and the inspection team agreed this was a particular strength of the course. The Introduction to Social Work module has a strong emphasis on critical exploration of research material and serious case reviews and this is followed up by the module Research for Practice and Final Project module which is a literature review-based dissertation. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

88. The inspection team were provided with links prior to inspection which outlined a range of advice and support services designed to meet both the academic and pastoral needs of all students. Such services include confidential counselling services, careers advice, disability support, faith and reflection, student well-being and student finance and funding.

89. In discussions with students the inspection team agreed that knowledge of these services was clear and for those who had used the services they gave very positive examples. This was mirrored in discussions with Practice Educators and placement partners and was again identified as a strength of the university by the inspection team. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

90. Students are allocated a Personal Tutor to support them throughout their studies and who can refer students to wider specialist support within the university. That support is also

available when students are on placement and the inspection team were told of specific adjustments made to support those students, such as lunchtime or evening meetings. Students had previously referred to these in discussion about support available to them. When discussing access to resources with placement partners, the inspection team were given examples of reasonable adjustments and specialist equipment where needed.

91. In addition to support for academic development, students are also given personal and career development support. The inspection team were provided with an employment plan given to students. The plan includes a specific session towards the end of the course dedicated to support and information regarding the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

92. The course team demonstrated how student suitability of conduct, character and health is checked at the start of the course and during the duration of the course. The course team evidenced how the Fitness to Practise Regulations and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures are used for any students who do declare any changes. The inspection team reviewed the policies and processes and were satisfied that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

93. As highlighted under standard 5.1, supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments was well demonstrated by the university. The university was able to demonstrate that any needs indicated during a prospective student's application to the course would immediately be sent to the relevant support area to liaise closely with the applicant to ensure their needs could and would be met at the point of enrolment onto the course. When meeting with representatives from specialist support team members, the inspection team were then given examples of support available and of how this is continued for the duration of the student's studies including placements. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

94. As identified under standard 2.1, the inspection team were unable to establish through discussion or review of the evidence a definitive answer regarding how and where information relating to mandatory attendance and course progression is made available to students. There was also no clear documentation regarding which modules students are able to resit or retake and when asked about this specifically the students were unable to provide an answer or point to where they could find that information.

95. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that two conditions are set against Standards 2.1, 5.5 and 5.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.6

96. As identified under standards 2.1 and 5.4 above; following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that two conditions are set against Standards 2.1, 5.5 and 5.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.7

97. As highlighted under standard 4.10, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided and discussed the feedback mechanisms with current students. The students spoke positively about how and when they are given feedback in relation to assessment and placement and how it enabled them to improve in these areas. Therefore the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

98. The inspection team was able to identify the university policies and procedures around academic appeals from the documentary evidence provided. They were provided with links to where these processes are made available to students which were via the student handbook and website. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register

Standard 6.1

99. As the qualifying course is a Masters in Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved with conditions. These will be monitored for completion.

Conditions

Conditions for approval are set if there are areas of a course that do not currently meet our standards. Conditions must be met by the education provider within the agreed timescales.

Having considered whether approval with conditions or a refusal of approval was an appropriate course of action, the inspection team are proposing the following conditions for this course at this time.

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	2.1, 5.5 and 5.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how they will clearly communicate to students which parts of the course are mandatory to attend, including placement attendance. The consequences of non-attendance also needs to be stated clearly.	31 March 2022	Paragraph 38 Paragraph 94 Paragraph 96
2	2.1, 5.5 and 5.6 ?	The education provider will provide evidence that that clearly communicates to students how to progress within the course This needs to include information about resit opportunities for modules and placements.	31 March 2022	Paragraph 38 Paragraph 94 Paragraph 96

Recommendations

In addition to the conditions above, the inspectors identified the following recommendations for the education provider. These recommendations highlight areas that the education provider may wish to consider. The recommendations do not affect any decision relating to course approval.

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.4	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider introducing a timescale relating to the suitability panel process to ensure a consistent experience for all applicants.	Paragraph 31
2	1.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider expanding information on the website to provide more details about the admissions process and related checks. This could include what support is then available for anyone making declarations to encourage applicants to engage at the earliest opportunity.	Paragraph 37
3.	2.7	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider strengthening the Practice Learning Agreement by specifically including whistleblowing and raising concerns processes as part of that agreement.	Paragraph 49
4.	3.3	The inspectors are recommending that the placement handbook could be revised to outline clearly the minimum expectations for each placement to provide consistency between providers and clarity for students.	Paragraph 55

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
Admissions			
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.	☒	☐	☐
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	☐	☐	☒
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☒	☐	☐
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	☐	☐	☒

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.			
Learning environment			
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: i) placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and ii) 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.	☐	☒	☐
2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	☒	☐	☐
2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	☒	☐	☐
2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.	☒	☐	☐
2.6 Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.	☒	☐	☐
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to	☐	☐	☒

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.			
Course governance, management and quality			
3.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.	☒	☐	☐
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	☒	☐	☐
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☐	☐	☒
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not limited to the management and monitoring of courses and the allocation of practice education.	☒	☐	☐
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, people with lived experience of social work, and students.	☒	☐	☐
3.6 Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.			
3.7 Ensure that a lead social worker is in place to hold overall professional responsibility for the course. This person must be appropriately qualified and experienced, and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
3.8 Ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective course.	☒	☐	☐
3.9 Evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes, such as the results of exams and assessments, by collecting, analysing and using student data, including data on equality and diversity.	☒	☐	☐
3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum and assessment			
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.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.			
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	☒	☐	☐
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.			
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: I. confidential counselling services; II. careers advice and support; and III. occupational health services	☒	☐	☐
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
5.5 Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	☐	☒	☐
5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	☐	☒	☐
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	☒	☐	☐
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	☒	☐	☐
Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register			
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

Approved.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

1. If conditions are applied to a course approval, Social Work England completes a conditions review to make sure education providers have complied with the conditions and are meeting all of the [education and training standards](#).
2. Inspectors will undertake the conditions review and make recommendations to Social Work England's decision maker.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	2.1, 5.5 and 5.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how they will clearly communicate to students which parts of the course are mandatory to attend, including placement attendance. The consequences of non-attendance also needs to be stated clearly.	Condition met
2	2.1, 5.5 and 5.6 ?	The education provider will provide evidence that that clearly communicates to students how to progress within the course This needs to include information about resit opportunities for modules and placements.	Condition met

Findings

3. This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above.

4. After the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that all of the conditions set against the approval of the MA Social Work course are met.

5. In relation to the first condition against standards 2.1, 5.5 and 5.6, the course provider has supplied updated documentary evidence, which included the Student Handbook. The changes highlight the clear message on attendance requirements for both module and placement attendance. Consequences of failing to meet the attendance requirements are also made clear. This evidence was reviewed by the inspection team who agreed this standard is now met.

6. In relation to the second condition against standards 2.1, 5.5 and 5.6, the course provider has submitted documentary evidence showing how progression is communicated to students. This includes, Module Assessment and Progression guidance, which includes the placement modules, information and guidance about resits and their impact, including resitting placements. This evidence was reviewed by the inspection team who agreed this standard is now met.