

Inspection Report

Course provider: Heart of Worcestershire College

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work

Inspection dates: 29/03/22 - 31/03/22

Report date:	12/05/2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	14/07/2022

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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 of Inspection

15. Heart of Worcestershire College 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	HWCR1
Course provider	Heart of Worcestershire College
Validating body (if different)	Birmingham City University
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of study	Full Time
Maximum student cohort	30
Date of inspection	29/03/22 – 31/03/22
Inspection team	Naomi Barrett - Education Quality Assurance Officer Nigel Westwood - (Lay Inspector) Anne MacKay - (Registrant Inspector) Rebecca Mulvaney - Policy Manager (Education)
Inspector recommendation	Approved
Approval outcome	TO BE ADDED

Language

16. In this document we describe Heart of Worcestershire College as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the college’ and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 29 March 2022 to 31 March 2022. 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 nine students from the course, three from each level of study and one of which was a course representative. 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 college staff members from the course team, central support teams and senior staff members. The inspection team also met with representatives from the validating university, Birmingham City University. These included the Interim Head of Department of Social Work, Academic Advisor and specialist student support staff.

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 for applicants for the BA (Hons) Social Work course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Worcestershire County Council, Primrose Hospice and Birmingham Children's Trust. The inspection team also met with independent Practice Educators who engage with the

college's students as placement supervisors and representatives from the West Midlands Teaching Partnership.

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 college uses the West Midlands Teaching Partnership (WMTP) admissions process which they provided to the inspection team. Other documentary evidence relating to selection, interview activities and scoring were provided, along with the wider college support mechanisms related to these processes. All of these elements were reviewed by the inspection team.

26. When exploring involvement of people with lived experience of social work in the admissions process, the inspection team met with the college's Social Work Action Group (SWAG). The inspection team were told that the SWAG had whole ownership of the group task set as part of the interview process. This enables the members of SWAG to make informed recommendations regarding scoring and subsequent offers of a place on the course.

27. The inspection team, through meetings with admissions, course team, people with lived experience of social work, placement partners and the WMTP were satisfied that the college had a holistic approach to entry on to the course. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

28. The college were able to demonstrate how prior experience is considered as part of the admissions process through documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection. The Admissions Process document also explains what is considered relevant experience and provides a helpful explanation as to why this experience is asked for and assessed as part of the admission process. Therefore, the inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. The inspection team met with placement partners, practice educators and people with lived experience of social work, all of whom confirmed and discussed their involvement in

the admissions process. Activities discussed included interviewing, reviewing group tasks and scoring candidates.

30. 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

31. The college 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, and a Suitability Process. The latter includes a risk assessment for those making a DBS disclosure and a flowchart indicating all the steps to assess suitability.

32. When meeting with students they confirmed their awareness of these processes and spoke positively of their experience when making declarations regarding health issues or a query over DBS declarations. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

33. The college provided documentary evidence relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies prior to inspection which was reviewed by the inspection team. The course team went into detail about their EDI processes, policies and support mechanisms during the inspection.

34. Examples included at module, course and college level. A course level example is where the course team review the offers made to students and those who were unsuccessful to identify any trends or any particular support needs. At college level, the inspection team were told that prior to the pandemic, the college shared transparency data with the Office for Students (OFS) which included EDI trends when looking at drop out and retention. The OFS had recommended that this be paused during the pandemic and the college were waiting to hear about it starting again.

35. 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 they knew where they could go, should any additional support or adjustments be needed. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

36. The college webpage for the BA (Hons) Social Work course highlights entry requirements and additional information such as DBS and health checks. The inspection team were also

told of additional methods through which applicants could obtain information, such as the Course Leaflet, open days and direct enquiry.

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 Heart of Worcestershire College and discussed the different methods of finding information. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

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 suitable contrasting placements that would meet the requirements of this standard.

39. The course team also discussed the ongoing work they are undertaking with the West Midlands Teaching Partnership, Worcestershire County Council and Warwickshire Councils to grow placement capacity and placement type, to ensure there is a wide range of experiences available for students. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 2.2

40. The college provided documentary evidence relating to practice learning opportunities and how each placement is audited to ensure ongoing suitability. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners to discuss the types of placements on offer, along with associated tasks and how students are matched to them.

41. 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, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

42. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included a Collaborative Partnership Agreement, Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) framework, Health and Safety document and Practice Placement Portfolio and Guidance document which covered the processes for induction, supervision and quality assurance. The inspection team were told how the processes were used by both the course team and placement partners.

43. Students have the support of their Personal Tutor, Practice Educator and Workplace Supervisor who they can contact directly should they require additional advice or guidance whilst on placement. Students also told the inspection team of how the reasonable adjustments and personal support they needed was positively met by the placement provider, who were able to implement the adjustments. The students said they were happy with the support they had.

44. Student support was also 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. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

45. The inspection team reviewed 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 college sends placement partners student profiles they believe will be a good fit. The partners review these profiles and if satisfactory move to interview the student and discuss their learning needs identified in their profiles. Again, if satisfactory, this will lead to an offer of placement.

46. Both the students and the practice educators whom the inspection team met gave clear examples of these processes working effectively, and the inspection team were told that it is rare that a student is not accepted on a placement. Placement partners and practice educators both said that this was seen as a good indicator of the college accurately understanding both the student's needs and the placement opportunities partners can offer, what support and any reasonable adjustments they may be able to make. The inspection team agreed that this standard was 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 Developing Skills module which provides shadowing opportunities for students. The social worker being shadowed can also provide feedback about the student via the Agency Feedback Form which was reviewed by the inspection team.

48. The inspection team discussed students' readiness to practice with practice educators and were told that students from the college were of a very high standard. Many students at the college are mature students with lots of life experience which practice educators said can often be a big benefit in many of the placement settings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

49. The Policy on Practice Educator Quality Assurance Audit Process document stipulates checks of the practice partners employment methods to ensure that there are appropriately qualified Practice Educators in place. This process was discussed with Practice Educators and placement partners with both confirming that these processes were working in practice.

50. When discussing the support that practice educators get from the college, the inspection team were told that this had dropped off somewhat as a result of the pandemic. Previously they had been invited into the college for networking events and occasional workshops, but the only one still going was a report writing workshop. They all confirmed that if they requested support then it was received, but that pre-planned sessions had not yet started again. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met but agreed that this was an area that the college could look to strengthen and therefore the inspection team are recommending this be reviewed. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.7

51. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the Whistleblowing Procedures for BA Social Work Students on Placement as part of Practice 1 and 2 Placement Portfolio and Guidance documents and the Social Work Whistleblowing Guidance documents. The documents reviewed outline whistleblowing and raising concerns processes and include a flowchart to aid students in these situations.

52. When meeting with the course team, inspectors discussed whistleblowing and raising concerns and were told that there are a number of ways students can raise issues. It may be appropriate to use action plans, or the QAPL. The college reassures students that should they raise concerns about their placement, this will not be held against them. The course team said that they recognised that some work could be done to align policies and procedures more with placement partners, but from evidence reviewed the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

53. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted which included the College Management Structure Chart, Social Work Structure Chart, Institutional Overview Document and the BCU (Draft) Heart of Worcestershire College Collaboration Agreement 2021. These provided information around the delivery of the course and associated responsibilities both with the college and their validating body, Birmingham City University (BCU).

54. Discussions with the course team, senior management members and BCU colleagues highlighted which policies and processes are owned and operated by each organisation and

how they work together. An example of this was the revalidation of the course with BCU, the course team worked closely with BCU senior management to look at the proposed changes and agree which elements of their processes and policies the college could integrate. The BCU module evaluation process and extenuating circumstances process were examples of this.

55. 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

56. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted, which included Collaborative Partnership Working Agreement, Agency Profile, QAPL Audit and Social Work Practice Placement Contingency documents. During the inspection, the inspection team were given the opportunity to discuss these documents and how they work in practice with the course team, placement partners and practice educators. At the start of each placement, all parties enter into a Placement Learning Agreement which indicates where responsibilities lie and what is expected of each party.

57. Placement breakdown procedures were also explored during discussions and each group was able to talk the inspectors through the steps that would be taken and where the information can be located within the college documents. When meeting with students, they were also able to give specific examples of placement adjustments to ensure they could meet their learning needs.

58. The evidence and discussions demonstrated to the inspection team the ways that the college works with placement providers to ensure they can provide education and training, that appropriately meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. Therefore, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

59. The inspection team reviewed the Social Work Placement Support Plan, Supporting Students Fitness to Study Procedure, Positive DBS Disclosure Risk Assessment Form and QAPL documents, all of which contain policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk. These documents also indicate what support is available for students. Students also complete a Placement Profile which captures additional needs and is used when matching students to placements to ensure the placement partner can meet those needs. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

60. The inspection team, through the review of evidence alongside meetings held with practice placement partners, were assured of working relationships between the college and placement providers. Placement partners are involved in the Course Management Board, and some of the placement partners and practice educators the inspection team met with also spoke of being involved in interviewing applicants and being asked to take part in skills days. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

61. 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. 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.

62. The inspection team also met with senior management and BCU senior management involved in the internal quality management of the 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

63. As detailed above in standards 3.2 and associated evidence, the college clearly demonstrated how they work with BCU and 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.

64. The college also takes into consideration where their students reside and will link into their local authority and their workforce development to maximise placement leading to job opportunities. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

65. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Course Leader's CV and confirmed they are registered social worker.

66. 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 college to maintain this knowledge and to grow relationships with key stakeholders such as placement partners and people with lived experience of social work. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

67. The course team were able to demonstrate, through documentary evidence reviewed by the inspection team and in meetings, that they are adequately resourced and supported by senior management. The team are able to call on additional support from within the college but also have the budget to offer contracts to guest lecturers also, should they feel there is a need. BCU would also look at providing additional support should this be required.

68. Throughout 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. Therefore, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

69. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Institutional Evaluation document, CME Report for AY2020-21 HoW COLLEGE for 101221 and the External Examiner reports which the inspection team reviewed. During the inspection, the inspection team were provided with further information and evidence relating to audit mechanisms carried out by the college that then feed into forums such as the Course Committee, which includes students, and Course Management meetings.

70. When meeting with the senior management team, the inspection team were told of the college's improvement plans and that there are three panels held per academic session that feed into the improvement plan. The course lead must produce reports in relation to quality assurance that feed into quality reviews. The inspection team were also told how course level monitoring is also fed up to BCU.

71. The college recognises that they have a small cohort, predominately made up of white mature students and some of the data they gathered highlighted that black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students encounter more barriers than the main demographic. Further gaps were identified during the pandemic. The college is conducting some research to see if they can support these students better but also to do more to attract a more diverse student cohort. The college has identified this as a key co-production piece of work to be undertaken.

72. The inspection team were provided with information as to how the college collects and evaluates data in relation to students' performance and progression, therefore the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

73. The inspection team were provided information and evidence about the support available for the course team to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice. The course team are working with the WMTP and Worcestershire

County Council's Social Work Academy to consider how they can access five days front line practice.

74. The college partnership with BCU allows the course team access to a wide range of training resources and BCU's Educational Development Service, Centre for Academic Success and Learning and Organisational Development.

75. The senior management team confirmed that the college provides three staff development days alongside a Personal Development Review process which is a mechanism to identify any additional learning or support needs. All staff will be enrolled and complete the PGCERT which includes receiving Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) to which the course is aligned.

76. The course team also engage with the local teaching partnership, WMTP in regional activities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

77. The inspection team reviewed the Module Specifications, Course Specification and Module Map documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection which shows how the course learning outcomes are mapped to Social Work England's Professional Standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

78. The inspection team discussed the structure and content in more detail with the course team during an initial presentation by the course team around their curriculum and assessment strategy. The course team were able to demonstrate how each module builds knowledge, skills and reflective practice and how the assessments are designed to link with module and course learning outcomes. Learning outcomes that in turn link to the Professional Standards and other frameworks.

79. When meeting with the BA 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 therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

80. When meeting with each group of people from the representatives of placement partners, students, practice educators and people with lived experience, the inspection team heard positive examples of the good working relationships the college has with each group. 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.

81. These conversations alongside the documentary evidence, which demonstrated how placement partners, students and people with lived experience of social work are engaged

in the continuous review and development of the course satisfied the inspection team that this standard was met

Standard 4.3

82. The inspection team, having reviewed the college's overarching policies such as the Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Accessible Placements for Practice Learning Policy, were satisfied that the course had been designed in accordance with those policies and that the college 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

83. As this course has recently gone through revalidation with their validating partners, BCU, the course has been refreshed and a number of changes implemented. These changes were a mix of student and placement partner feedback as well as changes in legislation policy and practice. The college also considered research conducted by both BCU and the WMTP.

84. Documentary evidence provided to the inspection team prior to inspection included the BCU (draft) Heart of Worcestershire Collaboration Agreement and 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 continuous feedback about the course. Therefore, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

85. The inspection team reviewed the individual module descriptors that track across the course how theory and practice would be explored. It was clearly demonstrated where theory and practice linked to assessment and the associated learning outcomes.

86. This was explored in more detail with the course team as discussed in Standard 4.1 above, the inspection team having been shown some practical examples during a presentation by the course team. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

87. As the course provider is a college whose main portfolio of courses are at a Further Education level and not Higher Education, there are limited courses at degree level. Those courses are not professional courses that would lend themselves to students learning together. There is a heavy reliance on placements to provide multidisciplinary working for students.

88. However, in addition to placement activity the college submitted documentary evidence about the range of guest speakers, such as Occupational Therapists and the Police, and skills days activities which satisfied the inspection team that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

89. 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 college's Assessment and Feedback Policy and Birmingham City University Academic Regulations - Fourth Edition 2021-22. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

90. 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 in the presentation discussed in Standards 4.1 and 4.5 above. The module assessments are mapped against the curriculum, learning outcomes, Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and relevant Social Work England Professional Standards.

91. The team also discussed support available regarding assessment and what reasonable adjustments were available for students with particular learning needs. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

92. 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

93. Feedback processes are aligned with the college's Assessment and Feedback Policy which the inspection team reviewed along with External Examiner reports and the Course Specification document. Students are allocated a Personal Tutor with who they meet on a regular basis to discuss course progression, learning requirements and any other support needs. Students are also provided with feedback on formative assessments which can include feedback from people with lived experience of social work. Students are also given feedback as part of placement activity from supervisors and Practice Educators.

94. 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 inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

95. The external examiners are recruited by BCU and the college supplied their CVs showing their expertise and registration details. 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

96. Documentary evidence provided in relation to the systems that manage student progression included Practice 1 and 2 Placement Portfolio and Guidance Documents, Course Specification and Service User Feedback Sheet. These in addition to discussions with the course team, placement partners and SWAG members assured the inspection team that all parties are included in the systems identified and this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

97. The inspection team concluded that evidence-informed thinking and practice could be clearly demonstrated throughout the course and was particularly demonstrated in the module Learning from Research and Evidence Based Practice. The support mechanisms for students, along with feedback from members of the SWAG group also encourages them to develop their skills and approach to practice. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

98. Prior to inspection, the inspection team were provided with documentary evidence and links that 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, student well-being and student finance and funding.

99. The college also links in to BCU and students can access their resources to support their health and wellbeing. Certain policies and procedures are owned and implemented by BCU such as the Extenuating Circumstances and Review of Performance policy, Fitness to study and Fitness to practise policy and Students, Complaints, Policies and Attendance.

100. When discussing both the college and BCU support mechanisms with students they were able to share their knowledge and positive experiences of using these services from the college. However, when there has been a need to use the BCU processes some students advised of their frustration as they experienced delays in getting responses. When they had received a response, it had often been well past the agreed timescales and caused them concerns. A specific example was around needing extensions to assessment deadlines due to extenuating circumstances. The response would come past the assessment deadline which caused concern for the students.

101. The inspection team raised this with the college and BCU representatives who confirmed these issues and advised it was as a result of staff sickness and staffing changes, which have been addressed and there has been a return to agreed timescales. The inspection team therefore determined that concerns about timescales had been properly addressed and rectified and that this standard was therefore met.

Standard 5.2

102. Students are allocated a Personal Tutor to support them throughout their studies and who can refer students to further specialist support within the college. That support is also available when students are on placement and the inspection team were told by the students of specific adjustments made to support them, such as out of hours additional sessions to cover certain topics and adjustments to support students with childcare issues. The students spoke positively about all aspects of support from the college, naming particular staff members as going above and beyond for them.

103. When discussing access to resources with placement partners, the inspection team were given examples of reasonable adjustments and how these were managed in conjunction with the college. During meetings with the practice educators, they made particular reference to the very personalised support that students get from the college whilst on placement. Student support in relation to academic development was clearly demonstrated and the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

104. The inspection team reviewed the policies and processes submitted prior to inspection which included the Fitness-to-Practise-Procedure, Supporting-Students-Fitness-to-Study-Procedure, DBS Policy and the Academic-Misconduct-Procedure documents and were satisfied that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.

105. When meeting with students they were able to confirm their knowledge of the processes and requirements and therefore the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

106. The college was able to demonstrate that they are supportive of any reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments which was echoed by the placement partners the inspection team met with. When meeting with representatives from specialist support team members, the inspection team were given examples of support available and of how this is continued for the duration of the student's studies including placements.

107. Examples included evening events for students with disabilities to explore Disabled Student Allowance and additional grants to pay towards computer equipment. Hardship funds, childcare support and high travel costs can also be considered for students. The inspection team agreed this standard was met. There was also recognition of additional needs their mature students may have, particularly if they have been out of education for a while.

108. When discussing support with the students they were particularly positive about the disability support they had received from the college. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

109. Students are provided with the Course Handbook, along with the Assessment Schedule and Practice 1 and 2 Placement Portfolio and Guidance documents, all of which contain information about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker. The inspection team were able to review these documents and discuss them with the students. The college also works with Worcestershire County Council's Social Work Academy, with particular reference to their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) coordinator who provides information and feedback to the college. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

110. The inspection team reviewed the BCU (Draft) Heart of Worcestershire Collaboration Agreement with particular reference to Section 16 Student Complaints, policies, and attendance. The team also reviewed the practice placement modules which both contain information related to attendance requirements for students.

111. During the inspection, the course team were able to demonstrate the way attendance is monitored and where the trigger points are for investigation and intervention. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met, however they also agreed that the information presented to students could be revised to be more explicit and put in a more in a more central place where it will command greater prominence. Currently information is spread out and not necessarily easy to locate, and the inspection team are recommending this be reviewed. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.7

112. 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

113. The inspection team were able to identify the policies and procedures around academic appeals from the documentary evidence provided. These are owned by their validating partner, BCU. A demonstration of the virtual learning environment (VLE) highlighted where these processes are made available to students online but also in the student handbook reviewed by the inspection team. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

114. As the qualifying course is a BA (Hons) Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

115. The inspection team recommend that the course be approved

Recommendations

116. 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	Standard 2.6	The inspectors are recommending that the college consider strengthening structured and planned support for Practice Educators through the reinstatement of sessions	Paragraph 50
2.	Standard 5.6	The inspectors are recommending that the college consider making their attendance requirements and consequences more explicit and that they be held in a central, easily accessible location, rather than fragmented in multiple location.	Paragraph 111

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.

