

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Portsmouth

Course approval: MSc Social Work

Inspection dates: 15th – 18th February 2022

Report date:	24 th May 2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	6 th June 2022
Date conditions met and approved:	1 st August 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.
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.

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

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. The University of Portsmouth's MSc Social Work course, along with proposed changes to their curriculum for implementation in September 2022, 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	UPOR1
Course provider	University of Portsmouth
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	MSc Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	25
Date of inspection	15 th - 18 th February 2022
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer Sarah Sanderson - Education Quality Assurance Officer Gill Nixon – Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager Jane Jones - Lay Inspector Gary Dicken - Registrant Inspector
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Portsmouth as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the MSc Social Work as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 15th February to 18th February 2022 through online meetings. 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 7 students from the BSc (Hons) Social Work course and the MSc Social Work courses, who were at various levels of their study. Three of them were student representatives. Discussions included their experiences of teaching and learning, academic and pastoral support available to them, their practice placements, how prepared they felt for their training and their experience of the admissions process.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the senior management team, the teaching team, staff involved in practice learning, staff involved in providing academic and pastoral support, staff involved in the admissions process and IT development 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 various aspects of the running of the course. Discussions included how well supported and prepared they are to do their work, how they are involved in the course and what tasks and activities they complete at the university.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including employer partners from the local authority, local charities and the regional education network group, as well as practice educators.

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 along with the wider university support mechanisms related to these processes which was reviewed by the inspection team. Through meetings with the admissions team, course team, people with lived experience of social work and placement partners, the inspection team were able to satisfy themselves that the university had a holistic approach to entry on to the course. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

26. The inspection team reviewed evidence relating to the admissions process, including information on the website, process documentation, and spoke to the relevant staff involved. The inspectors satisfied themselves that prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions process at both the interview stage and within the written application. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

27. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence illustrating how a range of relevant people are involved in the admissions process. They held discussions with people with lived experience and employer partners who are involved in admissions processes and heard examples of how they participate and are consulted with, alongside documentary evidence illustrating this. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

28. The inspection team were able to review the processes in place for assessing the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. The inspection team confirmed with staff involved in administering these processes that the assessment process satisfied the relevant aspects of suitability. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

29. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included an interviewing protocol, admissions policy and admissions process which outlined the equality and diversity policies implemented at the admissions stage. The inspection team were able to review the information available to applicants and heard how they can request a support session once

they have been offered an interview, which provides them with additional help and advice as necessary. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

30. Through the review of documentary evidence, the inspection team were assured that students are provided with the information they need about their course. This was evidenced through the information available on the website, information provided through open days, and interview and assessment days. Students were also able to confirm that they had all the information they needed including where to find support if they required it. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

31. The inspection team concluded that the information provided within the programme handbook and practice learning handbook recognises and outlines the requirement for practice learning including placement and skills days. The practice learning handbook clearly recognises the requirement for at least one placement to be in a statutory setting and refers to the Social Work England definition.

32. Through the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team understood that in response to challenges in securing practice placements for students during the pandemic, the university has grown and developed its practice placement provision and is now working within 22 schools and colleges. The inspection team reviewed evidence in relation to these placements and the audit process followed by the university. They were provided with 4 examples of completed Faculty of Science audits for non-clinical placements, an excel spreadsheet listing current placements (February and September 2021), an example of learning opportunities in private, volunteering and independent placements, a practice learning agreement, a student placement feedback form, a Faculty of Science School of Health and Care Professions quality audit process flow chart, guidance for schools outlining learning opportunities matched to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), a Placement Audit 2021 template (School of Health and Care Professions), a job description for a student social worker in schools document and 4 examples of completed audits for practice placements in schools. Discussions with students helped to illustrate the range of learning opportunities that schools and colleges can provide through practice placements, both for statutory and non-statutory placements. However, the inspection team were concerned that some students were not always being provided with appropriate learning opportunities, and that there had been significant variation in the quality and breadth of students' placement experience across the cohort. The inspectors also noted inconsistency in the provision of supervision, including some examples of supervisors not having a knowledge of the appropriate frameworks necessary for student progression, although the inspectors acknowledge the extra support and training provided by the university to try address this. The inspectors concluded that the quality auditing process used to categorise a placement as statutory was not robust enough. The inspection team were not satisfied that the decision-making processes currently in place were adequate to allow the university to

ensure that statutory placements are meeting the requirements set out in the definition of a statutory placement. The inspection team concluded that this standard was not met.

33. Therefore, following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 2.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 2.2

34. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence which illustrated clear guidance and instruction for both students and practice educators to assist them in identifying learning opportunities during practice placements. This included the practice handbook and the practice learning agreement. The inspectors also viewed evidence of mapping of practice modules to the professional standards and relevant frameworks and were able to understand the learning opportunities provided through skills days. Inspectors heard from practice educators who described how recall days provided support for them to offer students appropriate guidance on practice learning opportunities. They also understood how an external consultant had supported the course team to identify learning opportunities within schools and offered advice and guidance resulting in documents being produced to support staff and students working in schools. However, the inspectors concluded that the audit processes in place do not allow the university to be sufficiently assured that all placements are able to offer the learning opportunities required and as a result agreed that this standard was not met.

35. Please also refer to evidence reviewed in standard 2.1, above.

36. Therefore, following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 2.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 2.3

37. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence which outlined the processes in place to ensure students receive an induction, support, access to resources and a realistic workload whilst on placement. The practice learning handbook, practice educator handbook, practice learning agreement and the practice learning agreement meetings were identified as evidence which described how these processes are carried out. The inspectors also met with practice educators, employer partners and staff involved in practice learning, who described how these processes work in practice. Discussions with students and staff involved in practice learning highlighted examples of difficulties when it came to ensuring students are provided with supervision, although these were not the majority. The inspectors heard

examples of inconsistencies and variation when it came to provision of supervision and were not confident that the quality audit processes in place ensured the course provider could be satisfied that all students were provided with appropriate supervision. The inspectors concluded that this standard was not met.

38. Please also refer to evidence reviewed in standard 2.1, above.

39. Therefore, following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 2.3 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 2.4

40. The inspection team reviewed practice placement module descriptors mapped to Social Work England's professional standards and relevant stage of the professional capabilities framework. The practice learning handbook outlines the expected learning opportunities according to the relevant stage of education, and the practice learning agreement meeting is used to agree appropriate responsibilities. The inspection team spoke with practice educators, students and staff involved in practice learning which provided insight into how these processes work. Analysis of the documentary evidence, including the quality audit process, and the meetings held with different groups, led the inspectors to agree that the quality audit process does not ensure that the course provider can be confident that while on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training. Consequently, the inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

41. Please also refer to evidence reviewed in standard 2.1, above.

42. Therefore, following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 2.4 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 2.5

43. The inspectors determined that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the course team that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice. The inspection team heard how this is completed through skills days, case studies and assessed observations within simulated scenarios. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

44. The inspection team reviewed the university's methods to ensure practice educators meet requirements to carry out their role, including the practice learning handbook and

practice learning agreement. Through meetings with practice educators the inspectors heard about the efficacy of the recall days which are offered to them. The inspection team also heard about a plan to encourage attendance through a 'contract of expectation' and how certificates are now offered to those who attend. Monthly drop-in sessions are provided and practice educators described how they found these very useful. The inspection team agreed this standard was met. The inspection team would like to attach a recommendation to this standard to suggest extending and monitoring the reach of the recall days and giving consideration to mandating attendance. Find this in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 2.7

45. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the practice learning handbook, a concerns form, teaching resources, the practice learning agreement and the placement audit form. The inspection team also spoke to students and heard examples of how policies were applied. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

46. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence they reviewed to illustrate the management and governance plan which supports the course. They were provided with information about the committee structure of the School of Health and Care Professions. They also reviewed information about the other committees and the associated roles, responsibilities and activities linked to them within the school, along with organisational and committee structure charts. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

47. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence prior to the inspection highlighting the work carried out within the Practice Learning Coordinators Forum (PLCF), the Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth Social Work Education Network (SHIP SWEN) and with the local education leads with Portsmouth City Council. They also reviewed the practice learning handbooks and meeting notes from the Portsmouth Social Work Education and Training Group (PSWETG), as well as practice learning agreements with Portsmouth City Council. During meetings they spoke to staff involved in placement provision and employer partners and members of the working groups responsible for placement provision. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

48. The practice learning agreements, practice learning handbooks and placement audit form were reviewed by the inspection team. They also met with staff and students who provided examples of how support is offered and provided while students are on placement. The inspection team also heard how practice educators and personal tutors work to provide necessary support and link with occupational health and wellbeing services at the university. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

49. Evidence submitted to support this standard included the terms of reference and memorandum of cooperation for SHIP SWEN, along with evidence of meetings with these groups and the PSWETG. This has been established more recently to formalise an already existing working partnership. The inspection team heard from employer partners and other stakeholders who described their involvement in various aspects of the course. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

50. The inspection team heard that the annual review process is informed by a range of people involved in the course, including employers, people with lived experience of social work and students. The inspectors reviewed evidence which illustrated processes used to collect data and feedback, for example through the Quality Assessment Dashboard (QUAD) and an Excellence Quality Improvement Plan (EQUIP). They also heard how this has informed the updates they are proposing to their course structure for 2022/23. Meetings with staff, employers, students and the Social Work Inclusion Group (SWIG) provided examples and experiences of how monitoring, evaluation and improvement involves these groups. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

51. The inspection team were reassured by the meeting with senior managers who confirmed that placement capacity was assured before any increase in student numbers was considered. The inspection team met with members from the SHIP SWEN and PLCF groups who collaborate to promote the development and capacity of practice placements and plan for the placements needed. Inspectors heard how quarterly meetings are held to facilitate this planning and that the placement coordinator works alongside stakeholders to ensure placement capacity meets student numbers. Course staff explained that during the pandemic they held several meetings with Portsmouth City Council to consider placement capacity and have now formalised partnership working within the PSWETG. Inspectors also heard about developing plans to establish a regional teaching partnership which would strengthen the strategic capability of the team. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

52. The inspection team reviewed the course lead's CV which confirmed both current registration with Social Work England and the possession of appropriate qualifications. The course lead is also a member of the school executive committee and SWEN. The School of Health and Care Professions has a commitment to educators spending time in practice and there is also an allocation of CPD hours for the lead. The inspection team agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the senior management team that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

53. The inspectors were provided with documentary evidence which showed 9 full time members of staff, including 7 who are registered social workers, with a range of research interests and experience. The inspectors were satisfied with plans for one member of staff on a fixed term contract. Through meetings with senior leaders the inspectors heard about a variety of mechanisms available to managers to ensure staff levels and resources are adequate. These included a 'buy back budget', which can be allocated for research, funding for part time, hourly staff and agility money, which is additional funding to use when people move or leave. Inspectors heard from students who expressed confidence in the staff delivering their course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

54. Inspectors were provided with documentary evidence which described how module assessment boards, annual monitoring and quality dashboard data inform the evaluative process followed by the university. The inspectors heard how data from the quality dashboard data is used in the workload planning process to identify areas of need, for example within academic skills input. This data has also been used to plan assessment and module changes. The university has an Access and Participation Plan which outlines how the data collected is analysed and informs action plans to address imbalances. For example, differences in attainment levels of particular groups were identified and they have put plans in place to eradicate unexplained performance gaps by 2030. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

55. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included information about the performance and development review system which supports staff to spend time back in practice, details of an allocated 160 hours for scholarly activity and 30 hours of CPD within individual workload plans. Inspectors were also made aware of the opportunity to request £500 from the school development fund which could be used to attend events or buy books. Through meetings with senior managers and employer partners the inspectors understood that staff have the opportunity to shadow practitioners at Portsmouth City Council. Throughout the pandemic this had proved difficult to realise and there are plans now for this to start in May 2022. Practice educators are encouraged to attend recall days and inspectors heard from staff that these were useful. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

56. Through the documentary evidence provided and their discussions with key stakeholders throughout the inspection, the inspection team were able to see how students are enabled to demonstrate they have the knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards. They saw how both the current and proposed modules are mapped to the professional standards and agreed that there was clear evidence of how the course had been designed and structured to prepare students for professional practice as social workers. Inspectors reviewed the university's curriculum specification document, which

showed how they align the course with a technical framework covering assessment, delivery models and marking. The inspectors were shown how the course is mapped to the professional standards, professional capabilities framework and knowledge and skills statements. Students that the inspectors met with articulated their knowledge and understanding of the professional standards and how they were able to work towards meeting them.

57. During the meetings held with members of the course team and senior managers, the inspectors were informed of the proposed changes to the curriculum for implementation in September 2022. The course team proposed that students will transfer to the new modules following the period of consultation with the students due to happen in May 2022. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence including learning outcomes mapped to the professional standards, new credit weightings and the frameworks used to inform the changes. They also heard about the rationale underpinning the proposed changes and were informed that the course changes have been considered as part of the university's annual review process. They were informed that new module descriptors have been created and agreed by the Associate Dean (Academic). The course structure for 2022-23 has been agreed by the Head of School. The final stage of internal validation is due to be completed in May 2022. The inspection team have requested to be provided with the final approval documentation from this internal validation process.

58. Therefore, following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 4.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 4.2

59. The inspection team met with the social work inclusion group (SWIG) and heard how they provide regular input into curriculum development and are involved in teaching on the course including through skills days. The inspectors also heard detail of the Create days and Debate days facilitated by staff and members of the SWIG. The inspectors reviewed the terms of reference for the SWIG and heard how they have recently reviewed their activities and provided an action plan for 2021/22. The Portsmouth social work education group helps to inform the input employers and practitioners have on the development and review of the curriculum. The proposed course structure for 2022-23 has a new module called Empowerment and Discrimination: Skills for Practice which have a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and contemporary social work. This new module also provides a further opportunity for people with lived experience to be involved with design, delivery and assessment of students. Through the meetings with key groups and a review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

60. The inspection team reviewed a range of documentary evidence which provided numerous examples of how principles of equality, diversity and inclusion accord with the design of the course. Evidence included the equality and diversity policy, the university's examinations and assessment regulations, the welcome letter and support available from the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC). Inspectors heard about a range of examples of additional support that can be provided, including specialist support to develop study skills strategies and extra time for assessments. Inspectors also heard about staff's involvement in the university's inclusivity festival and how they embed decolonising teaching and learning techniques. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

61. Through discussions with members of the course team the inspectors were able to understand how the proposed changes for September 2022 show how the university ensures the course is continually updated. The changes reflect an increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, practitioner led teaching and a focus on local social work practice models, including motivational interviewing, for example. The proposed course structure 2022-23 also has a new module called Empowerment and Discrimination: Skills for Practice which have a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and contemporary social work at stage 1. The inspectors heard about a 10-year plan to increase the research focus and enable all staff to complete a PhD. They also understood how the annual monitoring and academic review processes facilitate continuous development. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

62. The inspection team reviewed evidence to show how theory and practice is integrated into the course. Students are provided with support and learning opportunities to do this through skills days, teaching sessions as part of the practice placement modules and reflection and guidance provided by their practice educator. Further opportunities are also provided through the readiness for practice module, where students are encouraged to apply theoretical learning to real-life scenarios. Inspectors met with students and practice educators who spoke assuredly about integration of theory and practice. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

63. The evidence provided to the inspection team highlighted the opportunities available for students to work with and learn from a range of professions through the practice placements. They noted a range of these opportunities being provided in placements in schools. The inspectors heard from the course team and staff involved in practice placements that historically shared modules within the faculty aspired to provide multidisciplinary learning opportunities and that student feedback had highlighted a perception of an over-emphasis on health. Plans are being developed for shared group tutorials with other professional courses and simulated safeguarding scenarios with nursing and paramedic students. Currently professionals from other areas such as mental health

and domestic abuse offer teaching for the students through taught modules. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

64. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review the university's curriculum framework specification and the module descriptors. As part of the inspection, the inspection team were also provided with the module descriptors for the new proposed modules for September 2022. The evidence provided and reviewed assured the inspectors that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

65. Prior to inspection the inspection team were able to review documentary evidence provided to demonstrate an assessment strategy which was robust, reliable and valid. It illustrated how the curriculum and assessment strategy are mapped against Social Work England's professional standards. In addition, it showed how the learning outcomes are assessed in both a formative and summative manner ensuring students judged to have successfully passed these assessments have attained knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards. The inspectors noted assurance processes in place in the form of the Education Quality Committee, Course Leaders appraisal, module assessment board and external examiners' reports. Evidence was also provided to show clear processes for students having difficulty in progression and appeals. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

66. The inspection team were provided with evidence to indicate how assessments are mapped to the curriculum using the university's assessment for learning policy and assessment design principles. The inspectors were also provided with assessment schedules and the curriculum framework specification. A review of the documentation illustrated how assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

67. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review the examination and assessment regulations and course leader and module coordinator. The evidence presented showed clear marking and feedback criteria, processes and timeframes that students can expect to receive. During the meetings held with the students, no concerns were raised about how this is implemented. The inspection team were content that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

68. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed the examination and assessment regulations, external examiners regulations and procedures, guidance on the role of module coordinator, information showing the qualifications of practice educators, a document detailing staff profiles and confirmation that the two external examiners are registered with

Social Work England. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence showed that assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise and that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

69. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence which showed how students' progression is managed by a range of people and includes observation of direct practice. This included the readiness for learning and practice module descriptor, the practice learning handbook and the placement handbook. The evidence showed how practice educators and supervisors are involved in direct observation of practice in both placements. Members of the social work team and people with lived experience are also involved in managing progression and providing feedback, which was further evidenced within the service user inclusion and coproduction module descriptor. Through meetings with staff involved in practice education, the inspection team heard about plans to develop a practice assessment panel. The inspection team would like to attach a recommendation to this standard and would suggest that a practice assessment panel is developed and established to enhance and strengthen the assessment mechanisms already in place. However, the inspection team were assured that this standard was met. Find this in the [recommendations table](#).

Standard 4.13

70. The inspection team were able to review evidence including module descriptors for using evidence and research in social work at stage 2 in the Dissertation module, and the proposed new Social Work Theory and Evidence module at stage 1 which illustrate the opportunity for students to link theory to practice and develop an evidence-informed approach to practice. The inspection team also assessed information on several skills days providing learning opportunities for students to further develop these skills. The learning outcomes and assessment for both practice placements focussed on feedback from people with lived experience of social work. Discussions held with students and practice educators provided further evidence that the course design meets this standard. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

71. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence prior to the inspection, including information on the university's website providing detail of the support services. These included confidential counselling services, careers advice and occupational health services. The inspection team also heard from students about their experience of accessing these services and from the staff responsible for providing the services and signposting to them. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

72. Evidence provided to the inspection team outlined the provision of a personal tutor system for all students, which begins at the start of all students' courses. The inspection team understood how regular meetings are held, communication is managed and how personal tutors themselves are supported to provide their tutoring role. Students have access to their MyPort pages which provide links and information to academic support services, for example. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

73. Within the documentary evidence submitted the process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students was outlined. Students are required to complete a declaration at the start of each academic year and part of the role of the practice educator is to assess the suitability of students. Inspectors reviewed the school Fitness to Practice processes and the student Code of Behaviour which are currently being reviewed. The School explained that the Fitness to Practice documentation is currently an appendix within the Code of Behaviour Policy and that their intention is to extract the Fitness to Practice document and create this as a stand-alone policy. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

74. The inspectors were provided with evidence of the reasonable adjustments which are made for students to support them on their course, which allowed them to understand the range of support available. The inspection team were informed of the various mechanisms in place for students to receive the necessary support, for example through the examination and assessment regulation, the personal tutoring and development framework and personal tutors. Wider university services such as the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre provide advice and support to students to enable them to progress through their course. Meetings with students and placement providers supported the evidence that support services are available and accessible. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

75. The inspection team reviewed information on the website, within handbooks and on the virtual learning environment, Moodle, where a range of information is provided for students about their course, including practice placements and assessments. The inspectors were provided with information about the new proposed module at stage 2, Transition to Employment and heard how it supports learning about professional standards, CPD, applying to the register and maintaining registration. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

76. The inspection team were able to review the programme and practice learning handbooks, along with the student handbook and virtual learning environment which informed students about which parts of the course are mandatory. Meetings held with the students provided further evidence of this knowledge as they articulated their

understanding of mandatory attendance on their course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

77. Through documentary evidence submitted and accompanying narrative the inspection team were able to understand the procedures followed to provide timely and meaningful feedback. The university's Examination and Assessment Regulations guide the processes involved, and the inspection team read how students are provided with feedback covering areas of strengths and ways in which the mark could have been improved. Discussions held with students confirmed that they are provided with timely and meaningful feedback which they find helpful. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

78. The process for submitting academic appeals is guided by the Examination and Assessment Regulations: academic appeals. The inspectors were provided with examples of outcome decision letters from the board of examiners, which also includes information about accessing support from the Students' Union and from wellbeing support. The MyPort pages also offer information for students on how to make academic appeals. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

79. As the qualifying course is a MSc Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

81. 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.

82. 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	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a more robust pre-placement audit of learning opportunities for students in all placements to ensure that non-local authority placements in particular can provide sufficient breadth of experience and also sufficient experience of 'statutory' tasks.	6.7.22	Paragraph 33
2	2.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a more robust pre-placement audit of learning opportunities for students in all placements to ensure that non-local authority placements in particular can provide sufficient breadth of experience and also sufficient experience of 'statutory' tasks.	6.7.22	Paragraph 36
3	2.3	The education provider will provide evidence that the audit process provides assurance of the provision of appropriate supervision in non-local authority placements	6.7.22	Paragraph 39
4	2.4	The education provider will provide evidence that, where the onsite supervisor is not a social worker or is a teacher who hasn't received training in	6.7.22	Paragraph 42

		this area, supervisors will receive training prior to taking students to ensure students will be given appropriate tasks for their stage of education and training in placements.		
5	4.1	The education provider will provide the final approval documentation from the internal validation process when it has been completed in May 2022.	6.7.22	Paragraph 58

Recommendations

83. 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	2.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider that the range of recall days be extended to maximise accessibility and to emphasise the link with professional Social Work England registration for practice educators.	Paragraph 44
2	4.12	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider introducing a moderation and approval stage for the assessment of practice portfolios such as a practice assessment panel made up of tutors, practice educators and employer partners to provide an enhancement to the systems which manage students' progression.	Paragraph 69

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

84. 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 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	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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 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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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 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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion 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 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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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.	☒	☐	☐
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 with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

About the conditions review

85. 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.
86. Inspectors undertake the conditions review and make recommendations to Social Work England's decision maker.
87. This is in accordance with Social Work England's education and training rules 2019.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation following the conditions review
1	Standard 2.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a more robust pre-placement audit of learning opportunities for students in all placements to ensure that non-local authority placements in particular can provide sufficient breadth of experience and also sufficient experience of 'statutory' tasks.	Condition met.
2	Standard 2.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a more robust pre-placement audit of learning opportunities for students in all placements to ensure that non-local authority placements in particular can provide sufficient breadth of experience and also sufficient experience of 'statutory' tasks.	Condition met.
3	Standard 2.3	The education provider will provide evidence that the audit process provides assurance of the provision of appropriate supervision in non-local authority placements.	Condition met.

4	Standard 2.4	The education provider will provide evidence that, where the onsite supervisor is not a social worker or is a teacher who hasn't received training in this area, supervisors will receive training prior to taking students to ensure students will be given appropriate tasks for their stage of education and training in placements.	Condition met.
5	Standard 4.1	The education provider will provide the final approval documentation from the internal validation process when it has been completed in May 2022.	Condition met.

Findings

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

89. After the review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team are satisfied that all of the conditions set against the approval of the BSc (Hons) Social Work and the MSc Social Work courses are met.

90. In relation to standard 2.1 and 2.2, the provider has submitted evidence of how they ensure they have a robust pre-placement audit of learning opportunities in place. The audit process demonstrates how the provider will assure themselves that non-local authority placements in particular can provide sufficient breadth of experience and statutory tasks. The narrative describes and evidences a robust process, and the standard is now met.

91. In relation to standard 2.3, a detailed narrative outlines the quality assurance processes the course provider will follow to ensure appropriate supervision is provided in non-local authority placements. Within the evidence there are detailed plans about how the provider will provide a check point to assure quality and identify any changes to the original audit information. This will be undertaken by the Faculty Placement Office and will include requesting specific information about learning opportunities, provision of supervision and the knowledge and skills held by the supervisor. This condition is now met.

92. In relation to standard 2.4, the provider submitted a detailed narrative alongside access to the audit process, where appropriate supervision is addressed. The

provider is now requiring all supervisors in non-local authority placements to attend training sessions, which will be provided regularly throughout the academic year. Evidence submitted included details of the learning outcomes for this training and the necessity for supervisors to complete the training prior to students starting in their practice placement. This condition is now met.

93. In relation to standard 4.1 inspectors were able to view evidence confirming approval of the internal validation process provided by the Academic Associate Dean for the module changes for the BSc (Hons) Social Work and the MSc Social Work courses. This condition is now met.

Conclusion

94. The inspection team is recommending that as the conditions have been met, the course be approved.
95. It should be noted that all qualifying social work courses will be subject to reapproval under Social Work England's 2021 education and training standards.

Regulator decision

Approved.