

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Chester

Course approval: MA Social Work and PGDip
Social Work

Inspection dates: 7th – 10th June 2022

Report date:	26 th July 2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	30 th September 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. The University of Chester's MA Social Work and PgDip Social Work course 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. As part of the same inspection the BA (Hons) Social Work course was also inspected for which a separate report has been compiled.

16. As part of the evidence submission for this inspection, the inspectors reviewed information about a change which was made to the Readiness to Practice module for implementation in January 2022. The change was to the assessment at level 7 from a role play and reflective workbook to a role play and photo journal, with a 3000-word written reflection, and a change to some of the associated learning outcomes. Changes were made to the learning outcomes aligned with the 9 domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). The rationale provided for the change to the learning outcomes was that the previous content and assessment did not cover 3 of the PCF domains. The course provider explained that the changes would reflect the breadth of the PCF whilst offering a more inclusive approach to assessment of students' readiness for practice. The rationale for the changes to the mode of assessment were that they had encountered challenges with previous role play assessment as the student cohort had become more diverse, international and increased in size. Through an analysis of attainment data and feedback from students, the course team decided to redesign the assessment format, and submitted a module modification form outlining the changes, rationale and comments from the external examiner in support of the proposed change. This change was reviewed as part of the reapproval inspection.

Inspection ID	UCHR1
Course provider	University of Chester
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	MA Social Work and PgDip Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	30
Date of inspection	7 th – 10 th June 2022
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer Laura Mellon - Education Quality Assurance Officer Catherine O'Sullivan (Lay Inspector)

	Surj Sall-Dullat (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approval
Approval outcome	Approval

Language

17. In this document we describe the University of Chester as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the MA Social Work and PgDip Social Work courses as ‘the course’.

Inspection

18. A remote inspection took place from 7th June - 10th June 2022. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers, practice educators and people with lived experience of social work.

19. 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

20. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

21. The inspection team met with seven students on the course, from each of the two stages of study. 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

22. 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

23. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work from two organisations the university works with, Changes Plus and Focus on Involvement. 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

24. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including those who work within the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership and local authorities and practice educators, some of whom were independent.

Findings

25. 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

26. 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

27. The inspection team reviewed evidence relating to the admissions process, including information on the website and process documentation, and spoke to the relevant staff involved. At interview, applicants are asked a specific question in relation to prior relevant experience and are expected to demonstrate a commitment to social care work. 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

28. 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 demonstrating this. People with lived experience of social work and practice partners are involved with the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP) and the Agreement on Admissions and Recruitment. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

29. 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. One of these processes includes the necessity for all students to complete a Good Conduct Form and declarations are managed following a clear and consistent process. 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

30. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to the inspection included an Equality and Diversity Policy which is used to consider all applications. Reasonable adjustments are made for applicants, and they are asked about any requirements they have when they are invited to their interview, as well as through their application form which is completed directly with the university. The inspection team were assured that all individuals involved in the assessment day at admissions must have completed training on equality, diversity and inclusion. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

31. Through the review of documentary evidence, the inspection team were assured that applicants are provided with the information they need about their course. This was evidenced through the information available on the website and information provided through open days and experience days. Shortlisted applicants are provided with relevant information about their interview days. Within the meeting with students, they confirmed to the inspectors 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

32. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were provided with evidence to show that 18 of the skills days are delivered within the Readiness for Practice Module in year 1, and the additional 12 skills days taught in year 2, alongside the final placement module. The inspectors also reviewed evidence which illustrated the audit process which is followed to ensure that the university provides contrasting placements and at least one statutory placement, according to the definition set out by Social Work England. During the meeting with employer partners and representatives from the CMSWTP, the inspectors were able to understand the steps followed by the university and the teaching partnership to secure appropriate placements for students. The inspectors were assured this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

33. The inspection team were able to review the Practice Learning Agreement used to inform and guide the Practice Learning Agreement meeting which takes place before each placement. Placement providers are required to outline the learning opportunities available for students, and the placement handbooks support the expectations the university has for placement providers. Through the CMSWTP, Placement Coordinators are also provided with

a Placement Overview document which supports the provision of relevant practice learning opportunities. The inspection team understood that throughout the placement, feedback channels allow students to raise concerns they have during their placement about the learning opportunities they receive. This includes through their supervisor, practice educator and the QAPL form they complete at the end of the placement. The placement coordinator also offers group supervision where issues can be addressed. The inspection team were assured by the meeting with students that they are provided with practice learning opportunities, which help them to develop knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

34. Inspectors were able to understand the induction process offered to students and the overview the university has of elements which are covered as part of it. The Practice Learning Agreement sets out arrangements for the induction and the policies and procedures students require access to. Expectations, sources of support and workload are also discussed as part of the induction, and at the Mid-point assessment meeting these aspects are reviewed. The inspectors were able to hear from students, placement providers and practice educators that there was a clear, consistent induction process and each group were satisfied with the expectations and processes involved. Therefore, the inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

35. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed the placement handbooks which outline students' expectations and responsibilities whilst on placement. Students' responsibilities correlate to the relevant level of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and the Practice Learning Agreement meeting provides an opportunity for appropriate levels of responsibility to be established. The CMSWTP outlines a case responsibilities procedure for social work students, which is used to benchmark the level of responsibilities and ensure they are appropriate. Meetings with students, employer partners and practice educators corroborated this information and confirmed how the processes were utilised. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

36. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with documentary evidence which illustrated how students must complete and pass the Readiness for Direct Practice module in year 1. Inspectors reviewed evidence and heard from people with lived experience of social work, which highlighted that students are required to undertake an assessed role play interview and complete a reflective workbook as part of their assessment before starting a placement. During the meeting with students, inspectors heard how clear

their understanding was of this module, its purpose and how it supported their preparation for practice. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

37. The placement handbook for both placements 1 and 2 provided the inspection team with evidence of the expectations of the experience, qualifications and registered status of practice educators. In addition, the Practice Learning Agreement form sets out the requirements needed to be met by practice educators working with students. Through a review of the documentary evidence and throughout meetings held with members of the CMSWTP, the inspection team understood how training and development is provided for practice educators. Through the Pre-qualifying workstream the Teaching Partnership is able to provide training and development, and within a wide remit, including various branches of work they aspire to strengthen and highlight the value of the role of practice educators. The inspection team were also provided with the Practice Education Strategy document which exemplifies the range of work being progressed through the teaching partnership. Areas of project work include the practice educator role and maintaining currency and practice educators' mentoring. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

38. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed the information set out in both handbooks for placements 1 and 2. They contained clear and detailed processes which were required to be followed when a student needs to raise a concern. Before a placement starts, the Practice Learning Agreement is signed and includes the information students need, including sources of support and individuals to contact. As part of the induction process, placement providers are required to ensure that students are provided with their organisation's whistleblowing policy. The inspectors were also provided with the university's whistleblowing policy and understood how students are guided on how to apply it. During the meeting with students, no concerns were raised about their understanding of the use of policies and procedures in relation to their ability to challenge unsafe behaviour. Therefore, the inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

39. The inspection team were provided with evidence which outlined the organisational structure within the Faculty of Health and Social Care, and illustrated lines of accountability between members of staff. The Head of Department and the Social Work Lead maintain oversight of the course and hold line management responsibilities for the staff. The inspectors were also provided with information which outlined the Programme Leader's responsibilities, and information about the staff within the department delivering the course. During the meetings with the course team and with senior managers, the inspectors

were able to gain clear insight into the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course and understood how the Programme Committee functions as the main mechanism for quality assurance on the course. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

40. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed evidence which outlined the responsibility of the Placement Coordinator and their role within the Pre-qualifying workstream as part of the teaching partnership. Quality assurance of practice learning is overseen by the coordinator, and there are clear processes which are followed by placement providers to ensure they are providing appropriate practice learning placements for all students. As part of these processes the teaching partnership has produced a checklist to support practice educators manage concerns and follow necessary steps. The inspectors were able to hear a detailed example of how a placement breakdown had been managed, including the people involved, the support provided for students, the staff's aims and the outcomes. This example illustrated how a holistic approach was taken in relation to students' learning needs. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

41. During the inspection, the inspectors were able to meet with staff involved in the administration and delivery of support services to students which extended to when they were on their placements. The Practice Learning Agreement outlines any particular needs a student may have including learning needs, any needs associated with a disability, caring commitments and reasonable adjustments required. The agreement also covers issues of risk such as whistleblowing procedures, lone working and health and safety. Meetings with placement providers and students confirmed to the inspectors that the policies, support mechanisms and processes in place were clear, accessible and were utilised. The inspectors were assured this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

42. Through the CMSWTP, employers are involved in placement allocation and the inspectors heard from employers about how this process works. In addition, as part of the teaching partnership, the Pre-qualifying workstream meets every 6-8 weeks and its remit is focused on enhancing the placement experience and practice education. Within the meeting with senior managers, the inspectors heard how the teaching partnership is the main mechanism for gaining feedback from employers and is consulted with when changes are proposed. Inspectors were also provided with minutes from the Programme Committee for the course, and through discussions with the course team understood that although employers are invited to these meetings, their attendance can be limited. The Faculty Practice Committee uses feedback from employer partners to disseminate shared learning,

and the inspectors heard from employers that they are involved in a practice teaching pool, from which they are invited to work alongside academic staff in various elements of the course. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

43. The Programme Committee involves students, people with lived experience and employers, and inspectors were able to hear examples of themes explored within this forum. These included an evaluation of ways of working through the pandemic such as the impact on engagement, where staff were able to gain a clear insight into what was working well for students and what needed to be modified. Inspectors also heard about how students were involved in consultation on the planned move to the new campus and their assessment timetable. Via the online learning environment, Moodle, students are invited to complete module evaluations from which module reports are compiled and presented at the Programme Committee by the module leader. The Postgraduate Taught Experience Surveys (PTES) and Staff Student Liaison meetings are also mechanisms used to gather information on the student experience. Inspectors reviewed evidence which outlined to them how employers are involved in evaluation of the course and included the Pre-qualifying workstream, the placement audit process and the questionnaires provided to practice educators at the end of each placement. People with lived experience of social work attend the Programme Committee meetings, and during the meeting with people with lived experience of social work, inspectors heard more generally that people felt their opinions and input were valued. Inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

44. Inspectors were able to meet with the course team, staff involved in placement provision and members of the CMSWTP, who were able to detail the work the university undertakes to ensure student numbers are aligned to a clear, regionally responsive placement-provision strategy. The teaching partnership also works towards Key Performance Indicators set out by the Department for Education, one of which is to ensure they plan to align student numbers with the requirements of employers in the region. Inspectors were provided with evidence which outlined the annual process followed to match student numbers with the placements local authorities, and the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers can offer. During a meeting with members of the course team, inspectors understood that during the pandemic, numbers of placements provided by the PVI sector had reduced but currently numbers are increasing. Inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

45. 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 lead social worker collaborates closely with the Programme Lead and the course team to

help to plan and deliver the curriculum. 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

46. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed evidence which outlined the qualifications, experience, areas of expertise and specialist subject knowledge held by the course team. Inspectors were able to review staff CVs and discuss the numerous research areas, projects and specialisms during the meetings held. Areas of expertise include the criminal justice system, direct work with children and young people and practice education. The course team represent an adequate number of staff to deliver an effective course, and discussions held with external stakeholders and students confirmed this. The inspectors heard from senior managers about the support provided to new staff to gain appropriate teaching qualifications or apply for fellowship of Advance Higher Education. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

47. During the meeting held with senior managers, the inspection team were able to understand how data on student progression and attainment is evaluated, analysed and utilised by the university. One example shared included the analysis of data, which focused on the experience of students from a particular group with a protected characteristic whilst on placement and their corresponding attainment. This had resulted in modification to some placement processes and the team were awaiting the results of the changes made. The inspectors also heard about the positive attainment rates within the social work department for students with disabilities. Inspectors were told about the work undertaken by the subject librarian in collaboration with module leads and the work completed to audit and decolonise reading lists. The Continuous Monitoring of Enhancement (CME) system is used to inform and implement changes alongside the course team. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

48. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included work the teaching partnership are involved in to support academic staff to spend time in practice. Inspectors also reviewed evidence of staff involvement in the research hub which forms part of the Post-qualifying workstream, and promotes research activities with people with lived experience of social work and practitioners. During the meeting held with the course team the inspectors heard about how staff are offered 25 days as study leave, which includes access to funding which can support research, training courses and study days. The teaching partnership also includes an offer for staff to shadow social workers in practice or to take up roles if this is feasible. Inspectors were provided with a range of examples of how educators are supported to maintain links to practice which included offsite practice educators working as

part of the course team, staff completing their professional doctorate, mentor training and staff involved in facilitating reflective sessions for adult social workers during the pandemic. Inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

49. Through a review of the documentary evidence provided and 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. Inspectors reviewed the university's programme specification document, which showed how the course is aligned with relevant frameworks which informs assessment, delivery models and marking. The programme handbook shows how the programme's learning outcomes have been mapped to the professional standards, the Professional Capabilities Framework and the Knowledge and Skills Statements. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

50. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with minutes from, and the remit of, the Programme Committee meetings held which involve practitioners, employer partners and people with lived experience of social work. Inspectors were also able to review meeting minutes from the people with lived experience steering group, where members are involved in various elements of the course. Inspectors heard that there is scope to develop the involvement of people with lived experience within the teaching partnership and embed their work further within the workstreams there. During meetings held, the inspectors heard requests from people with lived experience to have further and wider opportunities provided to them. This included being involved in areas of the course including teaching and assessment, as well as course design. Inspectors understood that practitioners had been involved, through the teaching partnership, with working on the pre-placement module. They were responsible for implementing changes to questions at admissions, aspiring to increase practitioner attendance at development meetings and capturing the perspective of supervisors within post-placement feedback. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

51. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed the university's Equality Policy in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Charter which are used to inform course design. During the meeting with employer partners, the inspectors heard how an anti-discrimination policy for placement had been developed which captures data and assists in the ability to respond to issues or themes which arise. The feedback form for practice educators and students now has questions related specifically to equality, diversity and

inclusion, and how issues which have arisen have been dealt with. Inspectors met with staff involved in designing and delivering support services to provide additional resources and support where this is required, and heard that academic teaching hours reflect consideration given to those with caring responsibilities. They were also informed of the project Inspiring Futures which aims to widen participation by providing support through the selection process, funding up to £500 for resources for interviews and ring-fenced work experience. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

52. Through discussions with the course team, practice educators and employer partners, and a review of the documentary evidence, the inspectors were provided with an oversight of how the course is continually updated. Annual planning days help the team to develop ideas for ways in which the course should be developed, which are then discussed at the Programme Committee and inform module modifications. The inspectors heard a range of examples of work the team have undertaken to update elements of the course, which included recruitment of both staff and students and wanting to provide a more diverse cohort of both, and a change made to an assessment in Readiness to Practice. Senior managers explained how the team are able to weave contemporary issues into modules, which the course team are able to gain from part time members of staff working in practice, established links with practitioners and research active members of staff. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

53. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed the programme specification which outlines how theory and practice are integrated into students' learning. Inspectors reviewed module descriptors including Applied Sociology and Social Policy, Placement 1 and Placement 2. During the meeting held with students, inspectors heard how their academic learning completed at university was consolidated during their placements and how the support from their practice educators facilitated this. Further confirmation came from the meeting with practice educators where examples were provided of setting clear expectations of students to make the links between theory and practice. Inspectors were also told about one example of a student who is developing their own reflective model, and another example of a framework used within the teaching partnership to further embed theory into practice. Therefore, the inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

54. During practice placements students are provided with opportunities to work with and learn from other professions, and these opportunities are identified in the Practice Placement Agreement. Inspectors heard that within the dissertation module in year 2 of the course, students have the opportunity to collaborate with nursing colleagues and take part

in critical appraisals of specific interventions and needs in mental health care, for example. All students are invited to shared conferences with different professions, and skills days involving preparation for placements have included visiting speakers. Students have again been able to visit a family court where they have had the opportunity to speak to a judge. As part of the move to a new campus in September 2022, inspectors heard about the new simulation suite which will be provided. Students will have the opportunity to use a simulated flat and hospital ward with a classroom setting. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met and would like to attach a [recommendation](#) against the standard.

Standard 4.7

55. The inspectors were informed that The Design of Academic Provision and Structures informs the modular structure of the course and were provided with module descriptors exemplifying how the hours are arranged. Students have a mixture of direct tutor contact and guided independent study, which reflect the requirements of each stage of study enabling students to meet the required level of competence. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

56. 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 and external examiners' reports. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

57. The inspection team were provided with evidence to indicate how assessments are mapped to the curriculum and reviewed the assessment grid. An overview of the documentation illustrated how assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression. Meetings with students raised no concerns about their assessment progression, and the course team were able to provide an example of how they were sensitively responsive to feedback about the timing of assessments which had resulted in changes being made. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

Inspectors were able to review module descriptors which illustrated the range of feedback students receive for both summative and formative assessments, which is overseen by the

university's Quality and Standards manual. Students are encouraged to download feedback they receive and are offered progress tutorials with their personal tutor. The midpoint review meeting held during the placement provides opportunity for students to receive feedback on their progression in learning and is supported by their reflective log which they complete daily. Inspectors agreed that students were provided with feedback to support their ongoing development and agreed the standard was met.

Standard 4.11

58. Inspectors were able to review the CVs of the course team and staff involved in assessment, which satisfied them that appropriate expertise, qualifications and experience were held, including registration of the External Examiners. Marking moderation is carried out and new members of staff are provided with appropriate training and induction for assessment and marking. The university ensures that practice educators are also appropriately qualified and experienced. Inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

59. Prior to the inspection, inspectors were able to review information about the systems used to manage students' progression. The Awards Assessment Board and the Module Assessment Board are responsible for considering the progression of students, their assessment outcomes and resubmission of assessments. The Practice Learning Handbooks outline requirements for direct observation of practice, and inspectors reviewed evidence which described the range of people involved in the assessment of students, including practice educators, people with lived experience of social work, academic staff and external examiners. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

60. During the meeting with students the inspectors heard evidence that students were able to apply skills of critical analysis and knowledge of research, and students also articulated an ability to apply evidence in practice. Students spoke about the accessibility of research resources within the virtual learning environment and the efficacy in the way they are taught about theory throughout the course, enabling them to apply their knowledge when on placement. Within the module Approaches to Research, students are provided with the opportunity to critique research methods used by academics on the course team in their own research. Within all other modules students are invited to utilise peer reviewed research to assess the efficacy of practice, for example. As part of their Placement Portfolio, students are required to complete a Critical Analysis of Practice and an Analysis of Feedback of People with Lived Experience, helping to develop their skills of evaluating research and applying it. The inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

61. During the inspection, the inspection team met with staff responsible for the administration and delivery of support resources including counselling services, careers advice and occupational health services. The inspectors heard about a range of examples of wellbeing support services, methods of access and a variety of levels of support on offer. They included wellbeing sessions on anxiety and procrastination, and a student-parent support group. A specialist careers adviser was able to be involved in student inductions in year 1 and throughout the course, and also provided support to students to complete their Placement Learning Information Form through online drop-in and in-person appointments. Inspectors heard how Inclusion Plans are developed to plan and provide reasonable adjustments for students, and Placement Plans are developed in conjunction with academic and placement staff. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

62. Evidence provided to the inspection team outlined the provision of a personal academic 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 a wide range of support services online which provide links and information to academic support services, for example. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

63. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review documentary evidence which outlined the process students are required to follow as part of their re-enrolment at the start of each year. This included needing to complete a declaration of changes to health and conduct. Students' personal academic tutors and the course lead will meet with the student if there are any concerns to ensure appropriate support is provided and processes followed. The inspectors were able to have an overview of the university's Professional Suitability Procedures and gain an understanding of when and why they may be implemented. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

64. The university has a specialist Disability and Inclusion team, and during the inspection the inspectors met with staff involved in delivering these services. Inspectors were also able to review documentary evidence which outlined how students are supported to receive reasonable adjustments and individual support to access their learning and assessment. The inspectors understood how an Inclusion Plan and Reasonable Adjustment Placement Plan

are established and shared with appropriate staff within the university and placement providers to ensure students have the support they need. Throughout the inspection, the inspectors heard examples of the support provided and also of the support offered to personal academic tutors to help them guide students. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

65. Inspectors were able to review the Programme Handbook which contained a range of information for students about their assessments and curriculum. Information about assessments and placements is conveyed to students through their induction, where they are also introduced to the virtual learning platform. This provides information to students about each of their modules and includes detail of reading lists, assessment timings and learning which will be covered. During the final recall day in the last year, a social worker from the teaching partnership provides an overview of the Assisted and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) and information about professional registration is also covered. Inspectors reviewed evidence through their documentary review and meetings with support staff, which illustrated to them how students are provided with specialist careers advice and guidance. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

66. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed evidence which highlighted how attendance is monitored and how students understand the expectations associated with this. An app-based attendance reporting tool and an online attendance monitoring system, which automatically alerts tutors and students when attendance is low are utilised by the university. Placement days are recorded electronically and overseen by practice educators. Inspectors had oversight of the processes required to be followed if students miss placement or skills days and the students involved in the meetings held were clear about what was required of them. Therefore, the inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

67. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence which outlined the processes followed to ensure students are given timely and meaningful feedback on their work. Inspectors were able to understand how the university's Quality and Standards Manual on assessment informed feedback expectations and heard how feedback is provided in a timely way, allowing students to use it to inform subsequent assignments. The meeting with students provided insight into how students feel about the feedback they are provided with, with some feeling it was detailed and useful. Some felt it could have been more constructive, but they were aware of the support available from the personal tutors if they required it. Inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

68. The inspection team were informed of the information provided to students about the academic appeals process available to them. This is done through the Programme Handbook, during information sharing sessions at induction and through the university's portal. It is informed by the Academic Appeals Procedure document, and the associated timeframes involved are made clear to students. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

69. As the qualifying course is MA Social Work and PgDip Social Work course, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved.

Recommendations

The inspectors identified the following recommendation for the education provider. This recommendation highlights an area the education provider may wish to consider. The recommendation does not affect any decision relating to course approval.

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	4.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider extending the breadth of opportunities students are offered to work with and learn from other professions. This is to ensure students are receiving a holistic, diverse and consistent learning experience.	Paragraph 54

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.