

Inspection Report

Course provider: London Metropolitan University

Course approval:

MSc Social work

PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route)

Inspection dates: 5th July 2022 to 8th July 2022

Report date:	26.08.2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	12.10.2022
Date conditions met and approved:	16.12.2022

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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 London Metropolitan University 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	LMUR1
Course provider	London Metropolitan University
Validating body (if different)	n/a
Course inspected	MSc Social Work PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	MSc - 46
Date of inspection	5 th July 2022 to 8 th July 2022
Inspection team	Laura Mellon (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Sarah Sanderson (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Monica Murphy (Lay Inspector) Christine Stogdon (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe the London Metropolitan University as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the MSc Social Work as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. An offsite inspection took place from Tuesday 5th July 2022 until Friday 8th July 2022. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers, and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with two MSc students from the first year of the course. Discussions included admissions, feedback, raising concerns and processes, placements, breakdown of placement, and readiness for practice, changes to the course, various support services, appeals and evidence informed practice.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, admissions team, central support teams, members of the placement team, associate lecturers, and senior staff members.

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 work with the university. Discussions included their opportunities to be involved in various elements of the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Tower Hamlets council, Waltham Forest council, Barnet council, Housing for women and Providence Row Housing Authority, and the Northeast London teaching partnership.

Findings

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

25. As part of the submission of documentary evidence prior to the inspection the university advised of proposed changes to the course. It was agreed with the university that the approval of these changes would be considered as part of the reapproval inspection.

26. The proposed changes focus on migrating assessment to meet the principles of the university's education for social justice framework and looking to consolidate modules and introduce optional modules to develop specialist knowledge.

27. The university has confirmed that all the existing students will be transferred to the new version of the course which is proposed to commence in September 2022 and that a consultation of the students was undertaken. The university has confirmed that validation of the changes has already been completed.

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

28. The university provided documentary evidence relating to their admissions policies and procedures in place. During the inspection the inspection team heard more about the admissions process from members of the admissions team, such as how information communication technology and written and verbal skills are assessed during the admissions process.

29. The inspection team agreed that there appeared to be clear and well managed processes in place and were satisfied that the university had a clear and holistic approach to admission on to the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

30. The university provided documentary evidence that stipulates that an applicant should have 12 weeks experience and that this will be considered via a reference from a previous employer and that the experience must be working directly with people. This experience is also explored during the interview process.

31. The inspection team heard from the admissions team how prior experience is assessed and that they will also consider the context of more informal learning as well, for example care leavers. The students that we saw were also able to give examples of how prior

experience was considered at their interviews. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

32. The inspection team met with people with lived experience who confirmed their involvement in admissions interviews. The inspection team also heard from the admissions team that people with lived experience are given a briefing pack, always have a debrief before an interview and that there is a system for employer partners to book onto interviews.

33. However, during a meeting with the people with lived experience some of the attendees expressed concerns about their future involvement in the course relation to budgetary issues. The inspection team also met with students and one of the students could not remember any people with lived experience or practitioner being involved in their interview, only an academic.

34. After speaking with the admissions, course team and students about admissions it was clear that whilst people with lived experience and practitioners are involved in the admissions interviews there may not always be consistency about ensuring that all interviews have at least one or the other, in addition to an academic.

35. The inspection team therefore considered that whilst the standard is met as there is evidence of the involvement of people with lived experience in the admissions interviews, they also agreed that given the feedback from the people with lived experience and students, the university could strengthen the involvement of people with lived experience and enhance their processes further to ensure a consistent approach to the involvement of people with lived experience.

36. The inspection team agreed that further opportunities to involve people with lived experience in the admissions process could be considered by the university. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 1.4

37. The university demonstrated the process used to assess the suitability of an applicant's character, conduct and health through documentary evidence by providing evidence of the process and a copy of the self-declaration form.

38. Further explanation was given during the inspection of the process of review of any declarations that are made, including sometimes consulting with partner agencies as part of this. The inspection team agreed that the processes are in place, and it is clear what the requirements are. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

39. Prior to the inspection the university provided evidence of their equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies and provision for EDI training for course staff. However, it was unclear how EDI was implemented or monitored in relation to admissions.

40. The inspection team spoke to the people with lived experience, admissions, and course teams and all confirmed that there is no specific EDI training for people with lived experience or practitioners involved in the admissions interviews. The course team advised that the admissions briefing pack that is provided for people with lived experience and practitioners includes a section on unconscious bias. A copy of this briefing pack had been provided to the inspection team prior to the inspection.

41. The course team also confirmed that they do not track or request any information from practitioners or people with lived experience to check if they have previously had any EDI training.

42. The inspection team were therefore concerned that there was not sufficient monitoring in place to ensure that anyone involved in admissions interviews had had either specific EDI training or something similar to ensure that interviews are carried out in line with EDI principles.

43. The inspection team were in agreement that there needed to be a process in place for ensuring that all parties involved in interviews have received adequate up to date training in relation to EDI principles.

44. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending a condition is set against standard 1.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and the inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. [Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard 1.6

45. Prior to the inspection the university provided documentary evidence of the information available to applicants at the admissions stage.

46. During conversations with students as part of the inspection it became apparent that some students were not aware of whether they had received a bursary prior to accepting their offer and this had caused a number of students to withdraw from the course due to the financial implications.

47. Following a further review of the information available to applicants on the university website and a discussion with the admissions team about bursary allocations, the inspection team were of the opinion that further clarity needed to be provided to students. This was in

relation to financing the course and the process for awarding the bursary for the MSc students.

48. The team also confirmed that students currently have to pay for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and although there are discussions taking place around changing this, the students are not currently informed of the requirement for them to pay the fee.

49. The inspection team felt that there needed to be a condition around the financial information that is provided to applicants to ensure that they can make an informed decision on whether to take up an offer.

50. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending a condition is set against standard 1.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and the inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. [Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

51. The university provided documentary evidence showing clear information about placement requirements in the placement handbook, course specifications and module specifications.

52. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team also received additional information on where the skills days take place and during the inspection the inspection team heard more about this. The placement team advised the inspection team on the work that goes into matching and recording placements to ensure a contrast between placements.

53. The inspection team also heard about the self-identified placements, including how these are checked to ensure they are appropriate, and how the team ensure an adequate pool of placements are available by targeting PVI providers.

54. The inspection team were also informed that the university currently have a surplus of placements. The inspection team were therefore in agreement that this standard is met.

Standard 2.2

55. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence of the arrangements for practice educator training and accreditation to ensure that practice educators can provide a

level of practice learning opportunities to enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.

56. The inspection team were also provided with a copy of the practice learning agreement (PLA) which connects student learning needs to placement opportunities.

57. During the inspection, the inspection team spoke to the placement team and heard about how the personal development plan (PDP) and PLA are used to identify learning needs, and that the learning outcomes are mapped to the standards. The students complete a placement profile identifying their strengths from the first placement. There is also a link between the end of placement report and the next placement to monitor the student's needs. The practice educator will get a copy of the report from the first placement so that they can pick up with the student and PDP and look at learning needs for the second placement.

58. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

59. Prior to the inspection the university provided evidence of the guidance and information given to students and practice educators before placement. The university advised that they use Pan London Common Paperwork templates to ensure a comprehensive induction that is reviewed annually by the Social Work Education Network.

60. The PLA also covers areas such as supervision, support and workload, an induction checklist, policies, learning needs and opportunities, and information on assessment. The placement guidance provides comprehensive explanation of the roles of students and practice educators, what to expect, and what students need to do.

61. The inspection team spoke to practice educators who confirmed that there was clear induction and supervision in place, and that support is available from the university even whilst on placement. Students are also onsite one day a week and the placement team are available for drop-in sessions that day as well.

62. The students confirmed that support structures are there and that they know how to access support on placement. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

63. The university has provided evidence of the placement handbook, portfolio, and assessment information. The inspection team were also advised that there is a midway review, direct observations, professional PDP, and an end of placement report from practice educators.

64. All students are allocated a placement tutor who is responsible for monitoring and support and quality assurance of the placement takes place at the midway point by the placement tutor and at the end of the placement quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL).

65. The inspection team heard that practice educators will initially look at the placement application form to gauge if the placement can meet the learning needs of the student. The PLA identifies the learning opportunities and outcomes are set from this and reviewed throughout the placement. The readiness for practice module ensures that students have an idea of what to expect on placement and information is also available to them in the placement handbook.

66. The report at the end of the first placement is also used to look at what the learning needs are in the second placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

67. Prior to the inspection the university provided the module descriptors for the readiness of practice module which set out pre-practice learning opportunities with appropriate assessments. The modules covering readiness for practice appear to provide students with a good foundation for the placement.

68. The inspection team spoke with the placement team who appeared to be well resourced. The students also confirmed that they felt prepared for placement and that they were able to apply their learning to practice.

69. The practice educators confirmed that they will meet with the students before the placement starts to set out expectations. As a result, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

70. The university advised that the majority of their practice educators come through the practice educator professional standards (PEPS) course from the teaching partnership and have therefore completed the training course. The university also confirmed that they have refresher workshops and briefings.

71. It was noted that checks are carried out on practice educators when they start working with the university which includes requesting a curriculum vitae (CV) with qualifications and a check of Social Work England registration. However, a further conversation with the course team about the ongoing currency of practice educators confirmed that currently there are no mechanisms in place to check the currency of practice educators. The course team confirmed that after the initial check there is no further check of the register.

72. The inspection team felt that this left a gap in ensuring that practice educators still had relevant and current knowledge and that there needed to be a check to ensure that any practice educators are still registered on an ongoing basis. The course team indicated in the

meeting that this is something that they could add to their questionnaire either before each placement or annually to request confirmation of the ongoing registration of their practice educators.

73. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending a condition is set against standard 2.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and the inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. [Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard 2.7

74. The university provided documentary evidence of the placement handbook that clearly states the whistle blowing policy and the PLA includes guidance for students if concerns arise.

75. It was clear to the inspection team that students were confident about what they would need to do to raise concerns, and that policies are in place.

76. The course team also confirmed that they have introduced Open Door drop-in sessions for students to discuss any concerns related to placement and placement learning.

77. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

78. Documentary evidence provided by the university demonstrates policy and lines of accountability with a variety of established course management groups that involve all stakeholders.

79. The inspection team met with the senior management team who are actively engaged in producing a business plan and budget for supporting the growth of social work courses through increased staffing and leadership development.

80. It was noted by the inspection team that the university are working at strengthening leadership and that a principal lecturer is being brought in to assist the lead social worker, Principal Lecturer and Head of Social Work and to deputise for her. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

81. The university has provided documentary evidence of the processes and agreements in place with placement providers, minutes of meetings with stakeholders and the Northeast London teaching partnership sustainability plan.

82. The course team and practice educators gave examples of working together to resolve concerns raised about students, implementing structured support to remediate problems and providing alternatives where there is irretrievable breakdown in practice placements.

83. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

84. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with a copy of the PLA which covers policies to ensure the safety of placements and how to approach concerns.

85. The inspection team met with employer partners and practice educators who gave examples of relevant and appropriate measures put in place to support students during the placement. This included advice and support from practice tutors from the university. They confirmed that where students disclose any disability, placement providers work in collaboration with the university support services and the individual student to provide reasonable adjustments. It was confirmed within the documentary evidence provided that reasonable adjustment arrangements are discussed with the placement partner before the placement begins and agreed in the PLA with students and reviewed again at the midway point. All new placements are also quality assured with QAPL.

86. During the inspection the placement team confirmed that they are proactive in making sure the necessary policies and procedures are in place. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

87. The university has provided documentary evidence of employer partner involvement through their involvement in the teaching partnership.

88. The teaching partnership work with the placement team to ensure monitoring and allocation of placements and also refer social workers to the PEP course to help ensure an adequate supply of practice educators for final year statutory placements.

89. The employer partners are involved in practice assessment panels to consider termination, new placements with or without conditions, or whether a referral to fitness to practise is necessary.

90. Documentary evidence of stakeholder meetings showed the involvement of employer partners in forums to discuss curriculum development, admissions, assessment, and support. These also include staff, students, and discussion of QAPL analysis.

91. Stakeholder meeting minutes and discussion with all stakeholders provide assurance that employers are involved in the courses. This includes consultation on the design and development of the new courses. The documentary evidence also indicated that two members of the profession based in practice participate in fitness to practice panels.

92. The inspection team spoke to employer partners who were able to confirm that involvement is there and that there are open communications with the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

93. Documentary evidence confirms some processes are developed to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the course which include all stakeholder's involvement. The inspection team could see from the documentary evidence that processes are in place, and that meetings involve people with lived experience and employer partner involvement. The people with lived experience also confirmed their involvement in various aspects of the course.

94. The inspection team spoke with students who were unaware of the requirement to provide feedback about placement experiences through the QAPL process.

95. The inspection team spoke to the course team who confirmed that some slippage around the process and monitoring of QAPL had occurred since Covid such that placement audits and collating feedback from all stakeholders had not been taking place. The inspection team was therefore concerned that there is not currently a formal process taking place to provide regular or effective monitoring and reporting regarding placements.

96. The students also advised of varied experiences on placement. The inspection team was concerned that without the QAPL being consistently completed by students, who did not appear to be aware of this mechanism to feedback their concerns about placements, the university could not ensure the quality of future placements.

97. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team were satisfied that there was evidence of people with lived experience, practitioner and student involvement in the monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of the course.

98. However, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.5. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and the inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. [Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard 3.6

99. Documentary evidence has been provided by the university of the workforce planning with the teaching partnership.

100. The university confirmed that their intention is to increase student numbers from currently 40 - MSc students in 2022/2023 to 46 by 2025/2026, and that they currently have had no issues being able to place students.

101. The inspection team were satisfied that there is clear support from a resource point of view from management to increase student numbers. There are also available placements where statutory work is available and a clear strategy for this is in place. The course team confirmed that they currently have spare placements.

102. There is some geographical overlap between placement areas with other higher education institution social work courses however new placement areas are continuing to be developed. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

103. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the CV for the course lead social worker who provided overall responsibility for the programme. The inspection team were satisfied that this individual was a registered social worker and appropriately qualified and experience and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

104. The documentary evidence received from the university showed a clear range of staff expertise in a range of relevant subject areas that are key to the curriculum.

105. The inspection team were informed of the workload model by the senior management team, and it was confirmed that they now have the full complement of staff. Documentary evidence had been provided prior to inspection of the course teams staffing log including roles and responsibilities and confirmation of social work registration. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 3.9

106. The university provided documentary evidence in the annual course monitoring and evaluation document which included snapshots of evidence of all of the key performance indicators linked to recruitment, continuation, achievement and progression into employment. It also provides commentary on the actions and intervention that are planned to improve performance.

107. It was also noted that there are a number of EDI initiatives and mechanisms in place to evaluate evidence from External Examiner reports. External examiners provide feedback on student performance and their reports are considered at course review meetings.

108. The inspection team were shown dedicated software that analyses module results for student groups and saw an example of a student dashboard which collates multiple aspects of individual student performance which can be used by personal tutors in review with students.

109. The EDI and performance data was available to the inspection team, who saw a demonstration on how this can be reviewed to analyse performance and student demographics. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard is met.

Standard 3.10

110. The documentary evidence provided by the university showed examples of lots of staff opportunities to develop, research, and take part in training.

111. During the inspection, the course team provided further examples of research projects and various examples of being able to undertake activities to further support and maintain their knowledge and understanding of professional practice.

112. The course team also confirmed that staff are encouraged to obtain relevant teaching qualifications and participate in the higher education academy. The proposed changes to the course also offer optional modules that draw upon specific research interests of academic staff. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

113. As part of the periodic review process there have been changes made to modules to reflect developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice. The inspection team were also sent the self-evaluation document which provided a summary of the revalidation and proposed changes to the course structure. It also showed that the course learning outcomes are now mapped to Social Work England's Professional Standards.

114. The inspection team reviewed the updated programme specification, module learning outcomes mapping and individual module specifications prior to the inspection.

115. There are now also optional modules available to students and students were able to confirm that it is a generic course. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

116. The documentary evidence provided by the university indicated that people with lived experience have been involved in a number of course design and production activities and are invited to curriculum development days and periodic review development days. These also involve employer partners and practitioners, who are involved in various forums and discussions taking place.

117. During the inspection, the inspection team had meetings with employer partners and people with lived experience who confirmed that the above activity is taking place and that they have been involved in the proposed course changes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

118. The university provided the inspection team with evidence prior to the inspection of the access and participation plan and the education for social justice framework.

119. The inspection team heard more about the social justice framework and decolonising the curriculum during the inspection from the course team. The inspection team were satisfied that EDI is embedded across the course and that there has been revision of module content looking at decolonising the curriculum and that the course had been designed with human rights in mind.

120. During the inspection examples were provided of reasonable adjustments, support and wellbeing resources being available to students. The inspection team agreed therefore that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

121. The inspection team met with the subject specific librarian who confirmed that resources are current. The university had also provided documentary evidence prior to the inspection that reading lists and modules had been updated as part of the self-evaluation documentation.

122. The inspection team met with the course team and examples were given of various methods to ensure that course content is current. An associate lecturer confirmed updates to the law module, staff confirmed that they are bringing research into their teaching, and module content and skills days have practitioners coming in to provide currency.

123. As a result of information provided the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

124. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided in the placement handbook and module specifications which made reference to the integration of theory into practice.

125. During the inspection it was made clear from both the course team and students that theory and practice is central to the course. The students were able to speak confidently about applying theory to practice and provide examples of this. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

126. The course specification identifies a number of optional modules that have been brought in as part of the changes detailed earlier in this report. These modules give the opportunity for social work students to work with students on other courses studying for qualifications related to housing and youth work.

127. The course team also advised that the law module brings in solicitors, as an example of another profession, contributing to student academic learning.

128. The inspection team agreed that there are opportunities for students to work with and learn from other professions in placement, demonstrated from the variety of placement opportunities available to students that include integrated settings. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

129. The inspection team was satisfied that the module specifications and placement handbooks demonstrated sufficient amounts of learning in both academic and practice placements and also that there are systems in place to monitor attendance, and flags if this becomes an issue. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

130. The documentary evidence provided by the university prior to the inspection showed that the range of assessment tasks is varied from essays to portfolios and group presentations, and the assessment map depicts a clear structure of assessment timings.

131. The course team advised the inspection team that they had listened to stakeholder employer comments relating to assessments to ensure that assessment reflects transferable skills for social work practice. The new changes to the curriculum ensures a range of assessment methods that fit with the university's education for social justice framework.

132. The students commented on the transformative nature and progression of their studies to develop knowledge and skills essential to meet the professional standards.

133. The inspectors were satisfied that there is a strategy in place and that the external examiners are also satisfied with assessments. As a result, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

134. As with standard 4.8 above, the inspection team have reviewed documents in relation to assessments.

135. The placement team advised of the connection between first and second placements and confirmed that the report from the first placement forms part of the learning assessment for second placements, which indicated an element of continuity and developing learning. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

136. The documentary evidence provided indicated that feedback is integrated into the modules, scheduled tutorials, and informal team chats with students. The university also use electronic resources to allow the course team to leave detailed comments next to learning outcomes for students.

137. The inspection team heard about inconsistency with feedback in documentary evidence from the external examiner comments and from speaking with students. The course team confirmed that they are aware of issues with feedback, and they are looking to put in place strategies to ensure consistency. The university are introducing rubrics as part of this, and these will be introduced for the next academic year. They are also already doing things to look at parity marking, and they confirmed that there was a specific session looking at feedback at the curriculum development day.

138. The course team confirmed that they know that issues with feedback need to be addressed and they are currently undertaking remedial measures that are being put in place to ensure that feedback is meaningful by ensuring that there are 3 feedforward parts to each piece of feedback.

139. The students confirmed to the inspection team that their feedback is timely and is within 3 weeks.

140. The course team confirmed that they are aware of the issues with feedback, and they have begun to implement measures to improve the feedback process. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

141. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence in the form of CVs which evidenced the social work registration of the external examiners and that staff have clear academic expertise in the relevant subject areas.

142. Whilst the disruptions of Covid have interrupted normal processes for ensuring appropriate induction of external examiners, there was evidence that they are appointed appropriately and able to review and comment on student performance. Their voice is heard, and the course team are able to demonstrate how they are responding to required improvements.

143. The course team also advised that activities such as parity marking exercises and pre-moderation discussions are being deployed to assist in the development of all academic staff in marking and giving feedback.

144. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

145. The university provided documentary evidence prior to the inspection of the individual student dashboard. Subject Standards Boards are held 4 times a year and are responsible for setting and monitoring the standard of student achievement and the confirmation of marks for the assessment and reassessment of individual students at the level of the module.

146. It was also confirmed that each student has an academic tutor and that the external examiners attend meetings to discuss student performance on modules.

147. The inspection team met with practice educators and placement tutors who confirmed that they monitor student progress, with particular examples of this being at the PLA and midpoint review. The portfolio templates also include a lot of detail including space for comprehensive feedback from a diversity of lay and professional people.

148. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

149. The inspection team agreed prior to the inspection that the new module specifications and proposed changes to the course provided evidence of evidence-based practice and that there has been a shift to have a greater emphasis on evidence, which comes across through the documentary evidence supplied prior to the inspection.

150. The inspection team met with the course team who confirmed staff involvement in various pieces of research.

151. The students also gave examples of various theories they have learnt and put into practice whilst on placement. The inspection team was in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

152. Prior to the inspection the inspections team were provided with documentation of the support resources available to the students, which included a careers service, counselling service and a range of tailored support options. Documentary evidence was also provided in relation to the availability to students of a dedicated disability and dyslexia service and individual needs assessment reports for students with disabilities.

153. During the inspection the students confirmed that the support from the university was available on placement and that when issues were raised, they felt staff and teachers were approachable and supportive.

154. The inspections team met with support services and agreed that the student support that was offered was satisfactory. The school office confirmed that they were involved in front line support and signposting, and the inspection team felt that the various services were joined up and that they worked together. There were examples of multiple access points for support and a strong commitment from the university. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

155. The university ensures that each student has a personal academic tutor who has oversight of academic and personal development and is the same person throughout the course which provides continuity. Each subject area also has an academic mentor who supports skills development by offering skills related workshops and tailored support.

156. The inspection team met with members of various support teams who provided examples of workshops and ongoing support.

157. The inspection team met with students who said that they know who to go to and they can also access informal drop-in sessions operated by course leads.

158. There is also a specific academic mentor available to students who can advise on dissertation planning and professional development planning. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

159. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with documentation setting out the updated fitness to practice (FTP) processes which now include a cause for concern stage to assess any concerns.

160. During the inspection the students confirmed that they were made aware of the need to make a declaration at the start of the course, and as the course progresses that they will

make an annual declaration. The students also confirmed that they understood that they had to inform the university of any changes to their circumstances, including relating to their health and criminal proceedings, during the course.

161. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

162. As highlighted under standard 4.3, throughout the inspection the inspection team were provided with examples of support, reasonable adjustments and wellbeing resources being available to students.

163. The inspection team met with practice educators and the support team who confirmed the availability of support for students throughout the course and placement. The support team confirmed that the same advisor is allocated to support those students in receipt of services for the duration of that student's educational course. They also confirmed that needs assessments are shared with placement areas with the consent of students facilitating continuity in meeting reasonable adjustments.

164. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that guidance and procedures are in place and that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

165. Prior to inspection the documentary evidence provided by the university provided evidence to the inspection team of information on the website for students, and also information available on the visual learning environment, handbooks, and a link to the Social Work England registration page for further information.

166. During the inspection, the inspection team heard further evidence from the career development team who look at careers during the course, provide support to students with their CVs, and offer talks about continuing professional development. The requirements for continuing professional development are introduced early in the curriculum and further facilitated through personal development planning.

167. The students also confirmed that they understood the proposed course changes and had felt consulted on the changes with their views and feedback being taken on board. The students also confirmed that they are aware of their timetable including placement allocation and assessment points for their course. They understood the professional requirements for life-long learning and development through continuing professional development.

168. Therefore, the inspection team are in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

169. The inspection team were provided with a copy of the placement handbook which sets out the mandatory days on placement and evidence was provided that the students are informed throughout the course of the mandatory elements. The course specifications identify core modules and optional modules including the requirement to complete all mandatory academic and placement requirements to a minimum of honours degree level.

170. During the inspection the inspection team saw monitoring of attendance and heard about how the students are informed of the link between attendance and professional integrity.

171. The students also confirmed that they are aware of mandatory requirements of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

172. As highlighted under standard 4.10, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided and discussed feedback mechanisms with current students.

173. The inspection team heard about inconsistency with feedback in documentary evidence from the external examiner comments and from speaking with students. The course team confirmed that they are aware of issues with feedback, and they are looking to put in place strategies to ensure consistency. The university are introducing rubrics as part of this, and these will be introduced in the next academic year. They are also already doing things to look at parity marking, and they confirmed that there was a specific session looking at feedback at the curriculum development day.

174. Additionally, the feedback charter for students has been reviewed underpinned by the education for social justice framework to ensure feedback is inclusive and provides clearer guidance for academic development.

175. The course team confirmed that they know that issues with feedback need to be addressed and they are currently undertaking remedial measures that are being put in place to ensure that feedback is meaningful by ensuring that there are 3 feedforward parts to each piece of feedback.

176. The course team confirmed that they are aware of the issues with feedback, and they have begun to implement measures to improve the feedback process. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

177. The inspection team are therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

178. The university provided documentary evidence of their academic appeals process which supports the existence of criteria for mitigation if performance is adversely affected and processes for appeal.

179. During the inspection the students confirmed their knowledge and understanding of the appeal process and that they knew where to seek help if they needed assistance. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

180. As the qualifying courses are an MSc social work and PG Dip social work (MSc exit route) the inspection team agreed that this standard was met. The MSc has an exit award of Post Graduate Diploma with eligibility for registration as all mandatory and placement requirements are met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	1.5	Ensure that there is a system in place for ensuring that all parties involved in admissions interviews have received adequate up to date training in relation to EDI principles.	30 th November 2022	Paragraph 39
2	1.6	Ensure that the following information is provided to applicants at the admissions stage before an offer is accepted: a. whether there is a requirement or not for them to pay the DBS fee. b. Information on the process of the allocation of bursaries and the timeframe for a decision to be made.	30 th November 2022	Paragraph 45
3	2.6	Implement a process to ensure that practice educators have appropriate current knowledge, to carry out checks of their Social Work England registration and to ensure that practice educators' currency is monitored proactively.	30 th November 2022	Paragraph 70

4	3.5	Ensure that there is a mechanism in place to ensure that the QAPL process is consistently completed by the relevant people at the end of every placement.	30 th November 2022	Paragraph 93
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Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.3	It is recommended that the university strengthen the involvement of people with lived experience in the admissions process and enhance their processes further to ensure a consistent approach to the involvement of people with lived experience.	Paragraph 32

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Not 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	Not 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.	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met with conditions	Recommendations
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.	☒	☐	☐
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	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met with conditions	Recommendations
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,	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met with conditions	Recommendations
ongoing development, and review of the curriculum.			
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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met with conditions	Recommendations
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 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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met with conditions	Recommendations
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

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.

Inspectors undertake the conditions review and make recommendations to Social Work England's decision maker.

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.	1.5	Ensure that there is a system in place for ensuring that all parties involved in admissions interviews have received adequate up to date training in relation to EDI principles.	Condition met.
2.	1.6	Ensure that information is provided to applicants at the admissions stage before an offer is accepted as to whether there is a requirement or not for them to pay the DBS fee.	Condition met.
3.	2.6	Implement a process to ensure that practice educators have appropriate, current knowledge , to carry out checks of their Social Work England registration and to ensure that practice educators' currency is monitored proactively.	Condition met.
4.	3.5	Ensure that there is a mechanism in place to ensure that the QAPL process is consistently completed by the	Condition met.

		relevant people at the end of every placement.	
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Findings

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

For condition 1.5, the education provider submitted a narrative that outlined the mandatory training provided by the university in relation to EDI. It was confirmed that all those involved in admissions, including university staff, associate lecturers and people with lived experience would have access to the same opportunities and that non university staff would receive payment for participation in training. In addition to the specific training offered by the university, a discussion was held about training for colleagues involved in admissions within the social work stakeholder meeting. Within the meeting it was confirmed that any partner organisation who puts forwards a member of staff to take part in admissions panels would ensure they have received basic institutional EDI training. This would be augmented by an admissions briefing from the university that included issues such as unconscious bias in the interview process. As the minutes from the stakeholder meetings were shared with all partner agencies for agreement and action, the inspectors were assured that this process would be implemented consistently. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this condition was met.

In relation to standard 1.6, the education provider submitted a copy of their conditional offer letter that is shared with applicants upon being offered a place to study on course. Within the document, it is clearly stated that applicants will be required to pay for their DBS check as part of the conditions of their offer. The inspection team agreed that the condition was met.

The course provider submitted documentation which is shared with practice educators and details university expectations for the role. Within the evidence provided, the requirement to maintain current professional knowledge and hold registration with Social Work England is detailed and all practice educators are required to sign the document to confirm their agreement. In order to monitor the currency of practice educators, the university explained that the placement team will request updated CV's on a cyclical basis. The inspection team agreed that the condition was met.

In order to assure the inspection team that there is a mechanism in place to monitor QAPL processes used during placements, the education provider submitted stakeholder minutes which detail how the process will be used in respect of students, university staff and placement staff. It was outlined that information relating to the process will also be included in the placement handbook and that data gathered from QAPL submissions will be shared

within stakeholder meetings for further discussions. It was agreed that the condition was met.

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

Conclusion

The inspection team is recommending that as the conditions have been met, the course be approved.

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

Conditions met.