

Education quality assurance – Course change review report

Report date:

19/12/2022

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Documentary review details

Inspection ID	UWL961
Course provider	University of West London via Ruskin College
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course name	B Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Proposed first intake	04/01/2023
Maximum student cohort	15
Review type	Course change
Review team	Catherine Denny – Education Quality Assurance Officer Aidan Worsley – Lay Inspector Anne Mackay – Registrant Inspector
Review team recommendation	There is insufficient evidence to show how the course meets the standards and a full onsite inspection is required.
Outcome	Not approved

About the review

In 2020, the University of West London accommodated a transfer of students from Ruskin College following removal of approval of their BA Social Work course. This was managed via Social Work England’s course change process and approved in November 2020.

In August 2021, following a series of financial challenges, Ruskin College became part of the University of West London. In May 2022, the University of West London approached Social Work England regarding the proposal to deliver its B Social Work course from Ruskin College as well as their Brentford Campus. They proposed no change to the course content or mode of delivery. The university propose an initial cohort of 15, with the hope to rise to 25 in future

years. The university has provided evidence in support of this change request which has been reviewed by the allocated inspectors.

Findings

The University of West London identified 6 standards that would be impacted by the changes they wanted to implement. These related primarily to placement capacity, staffing structures, ratios and student support. Meetings were held between the university and Social Work England to discuss the course change process and evidence required to meet the standards.

Course change mapping and supporting evidence was first submitted to the Education Quality Assurance Team on the 17th of May 2022. Following an initial review of evidence by the allocated Education Quality Assurance Officer and Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager, further information was requested from the university in relation to the following:

- Standard 1:6 – Further information relating to the information provided to candidates about the admissions process for the new campus and the information supplied to allow candidates to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the course.
- Standards 2.2 and 3.6 – Further evidence to show planned student numbers alongside assurance that placements would be available to support these numbers.
- Standard 3.8 – Further evidence of workforce planning to show that UWL staff could cover teaching at Ruskin College campus whilst long term appointments are made.
- Standards 5.1/5.2 – Evidence to show what student support services would look like for students studying at Ruskin College campus.

Between the 17th of May and 20th of July, there were further Microsoft Teams meetings and submissions of evidence from the education provider. On the 21st of July inspectors were appointed to review the course change request and documentary evidence.

Following review by inspectors on the 15th of August 2022, the following was identified:

1. For all standards, with the exception of 1.6, 2.2, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 the university showed there was a continuation of their ability to meet the education and training standards via their current course model.
2. Standards 1.6, 2.2, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5 were directly impacted by the proposed change and required evidence to satisfy the inspectors that the university would continue to meet the standards. They related to provision of practice education, course governance, engagement of external stakeholders in curriculum and delivery and student support.

Additional information was requested from the course provider and a further call was arranged to outline the requests in more detail on the 17.08.22. A deadline for submission of evidence was set as the 9th September 2022. On the 8th of September, an email was received from the University of West London which stated university management had decided to delay the start of the course from Ruskin College until April 2023. As a result, an extension to the deadline was requested to ensure that there was time for evidence to be gathered. Following discussion

within the Education Quality Assurance Team, a final deadline for submission was agreed at 25th of November. This was later extended to the 30th of November due to an error in understanding from the course provider. Inspectors completed their review of evidence on the 13th of December.

The initial review and additional requests under each standard are outlined below. These have been separated by date to show information from the initial and second review completed by inspectors.

Standard 1.6: Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.

15.08.2022 – The education provider submitted admissions procedures and information used for the current social work course at the University of West London as evidence. The inspectors were also referred to the Social Work England course approval report for the B Social Work (Hons) dated October 2021. Upon reviewing evidence, inspectors noted that the information provided does not explicitly reference Ruskin College. The Ruskin College website provides information about course content, entry requirements, fees and funding but there is not reference to potential placements, support services or geographical location.

Inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – Following the feedback from inspectors, the course provider submitted a prospectus which clearly demonstrated that the course will be based at Ruskin College. The information provided however did not include reference to potential placements, the possibility of longer travel times due to geographical location and support that might be available to enable students to access the course.

As a result, the inspectors agreed that this standard was not met.

Standard 2.2: Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.

15.08.2022 - Inspectors were provided with a list of social work placement opportunities in the Oxfordshire area and a draft Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) between Oxfordshire County Council and The University of West London as Ruskin College. The table provided referenced placement audit dates from 2020/21 and inspectors therefore queried whether there will still be sufficient placement capacity for 2022 onwards. The MoC provided does not offer any firm commitment to placements for the course and supplementary emails from representatives within the local authority state no placements can be guaranteed.

Inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – In order to respond to the concerns raised by inspectors in relation to the assurance from placement partners of their commitment to provide practice learning opportunities, the course provider submitted an email from Oxfordshire County Council and a list of additional providers that the university intends to work with. Inspectors acknowledged that the email was helpful in demonstrating the expression of support from Oxfordshire County Council and their current position in relation to placements. Despite this, inspectors were not

assured that there was adequate evidence of demand from a range of employers for a new course to be developed within the area. Furthermore, the list of additional placements, whilst being helpful, requires further contextual information to understand whether it can meet the demands of the course.

As a result, inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 - Within the MoC, inspectors reviewed information relating to the provision of practice educators for any potential placements within Oxfordshire County Council. Inspectors recognised that the MoC identifies the provision of practice educators will usually be provided through the local authority however, where a practice educator is not identified, the responsibility sits with the university. Inspectors queried what the strategy was for increasing provision of suitably qualified practice educators in line with the growth of placement provision.

Inspectors agreed that further explanation was required to satisfy the standard.

13.12.2022 – Within the evidence mapping form, the course provider outlined their intention to continue to recruit additional practice educators to meet the demands of the course. Aside from this narrative, inspectors were unable to find any additional supporting evidence that detailed the strategy for how this would be achieved.

As no additional evidence was submitted in respect of this standard, inspectors agreed that the standard was not met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 – The education provider provided an overview of the current management and staffing structure within the social work department at the University of West London and outlined procedures in place to review course level issues and evaluate provision. Inspectors observed that there was very little supporting information on a strategic level which outlined the reasons for the move towards delivery of the course at another site.

Inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – Following inspectors' observation that there was little information to support their understanding of the growth of provision from a strategic perspective, the course provider was asked to respond to the following points;

- *Why does the senior leadership team see the growth of social work as being valuable?*
- *What planning has taken place within the university to accommodate this growth?*

There was no further information submitted in response to the above points and as a result inspectors agreed that the standard is not met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 – In line with the review of evidence in relation to standard 2.2, the inspectors felt that observations applied to the standard in the same way. Currently there is no commitment to placements from providers in the Oxfordshire area, neither is there a contingency plan provided by the university.

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – As noted in the review of standard 2.2, inspectors agreed that the additional information provided was not sufficient to assure them that placements which meet the relevant standards would be available to prospective students.

Therefore, inspectors agreed that this standard was not met.

Standard 3.6 - Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.

15.08.2022 – The university provided evidence relating to staffing arrangements for the course, including future recruitment planning as well as contingency from within the current staff team. As outlined in previous standards, inspectors felt there was a lack of strategic planning or data to show the demand for the course locally. There was a lack of information provided in relation to employer engagement with the education provider to show what regional demand might be for a further social work course.

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – Inspectors observed that the commentary provided by the university demonstrated that there was a strategic approach being taken to increase staffing to support the delivery of the course, which was positive. Despite this, inspectors concerns relating to the growth of provision and subsequent placement planning remained, as outlined in previous standards.

As a result, they agreed that this standard was not met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 – The university provided workload overviews for all staff within the social work team at the Brentford campus. In addition, inspectors were provided with links to recruitment pages for a full and part time lecturer. The university explained that the workload of current staff would allow for some to teach at Ruskin College if appointments to posts were not filled prior to the course commencing. Inspectors felt that the evidence provided suggested that there would be capacity within the team once new posts were appointed to however, they required further evidence to show plans for staff deployment.

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – As with standard 3.6, inspectors felt that the commentary provided by the university in relation to staffing was helpful however there was still a gap in their knowledge regarding the plan for staffing deployment across the Brentford campus and Ruskin College.

Inspectors agreed that this standard was not met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 – The university provided the previous course approval report as evidence to meet the standard. Inspectors felt that further evidence was required to demonstrate the practicalities of delivery at Ruskin College Campus, such as a draft timetable and explanation of delivery (i.e. details of any remote or blended teaching).

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – The course provider submitted draft timetables in support of this standard which was helpful in supporting their understanding of the plan for delivery, however there was a lack of clarity regarding the plan for a remote or blended model.

Despite this, inspectors agreed that, on balance, the standard is now met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 - The university explained that existing relationships with employers in the area would support course development and that relationships with people with lived experience would be developed in due course. The draft MoC provides some assurance of consultation with local authority partners, however there is no evidence to show planning for delivery of the course or action planning to demonstrate how work with service users and carers would be developed.

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – Inspectors recognised that there was an expression of intent in relation to working with people with lived experience of social work, however there was not evidence to support their involvement in the proposal or development of the course at Ruskin College to date.

As there was not additional evidence submitted in support of this standard, inspectors agreed that it remained unmet.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 – The university did not provide any additional information to meet the standard, however inspectors requested further detail about how interprofessional learning would be delivered at Ruskin College Campus.

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – The course provider outlined that students will have opportunities to learn with and from other professions through joint lectures with other discipline and visiting lecturers.

Inspectors agreed that this standard was now met.

Standard 5.1 - Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including:

- confidential counselling services.
- careers advice and support; and occupational health services.

15.08.22 – The university provided an overview document to outline how student services would operate for those studying at Ruskin College. All students would have access to a remote service to access services operating from University of West London's Ealing and Brentford campuses. This could be access via Microsoft Teams or telephone call. The university also offers online platforms in relation to mental health and wellbeing. In addition to the remote offer of provision, the university outlined their plan to have a full-time member of support staff based at Ruskin College site who would be able to triage and signpost students to appropriate support.

Inspectors requested assurance that that post at Ruskin College had been filled to assure them that the standard was met.

13.12.2022 – The course provider submitted evidence which showed details of recruitment planning and interim support for students studying at Ruskin College. Staff from student services departments at the University of West London were able to confirm plans for staffing increases as numbers at Ruskin College grow and the offer of video calls and dedicated online support being available in the interim.

Inspectors were assured that this standard was now met.

Standard 5.2 - Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.

15.08.2022 – The university outlined their intention to follow a similar model of provision in relation to personal and academic tutors as is currently in place for students at the Brentford campus.

Inspectors requested further detail regarding where personal tutors would be based and how students would be access them to assure them that the standard was met.

13.12.2022 – The course provider confirmed that all personal tutors would be based at Ruskin College to ensure close proximity to their tutees.

As a result, inspectors agreed that this standard was now met.

Standard 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.

15.08.2022 – The university did not provide any additional evidence to meet this standard and referred inspectors to previous course approval documentation. Inspectors queried whether a

student handbook had been developed for students accessing the course from the Ruskin College campus which details practical information about the course.

The inspectors agreed that this standard was not yet met.

13.12.2022 – The course provider submitted a copy of a student handbook and explained that it does not yet bear the Ruskin College logo as it is awaiting approval for the course. Despite this, inspectors agreed that there should be some reference to course delivery at Ruskin College. At the time of review, the proposed course handbook only referenced the course as it would be delivered at the Ealing or Brentford campus.

As a result, inspectors agreed that the standard was not yet met.

Conclusions

Whilst some of the additional evidence that was submitted assured inspectors that specific standards were now met, there are still several standards which remain unmet.

Inspectors are proposing that the course provider needs to gather and develop evidence that is specific to social work provision being delivered on a different site and in a different geographical area. It is important this be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and overseen by those responsible for leadership of social work provision across both sites. Inspectors recognise that this may require additional time to develop.

As a result of the above, the inspectors are recommending that, currently, there is insufficient evidence to show how the course meets the standards and an onsite inspection is required once the areas outlined have been addressed.

Regulator decision

Not approved.