

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Worcester

Course approval: BA(Hons) Social Work

Inspection dates: 4 April to 6 April 2023

Report date:	31 May 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	13 July 2023
Date conditions met and approved:	09 October 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
What we do	3
Summary of Inspection	5
Language	5
Inspection.....	6
Meetings with students	6
Meetings with course staff.....	6
Meeting with people with lived experience of social work	6
Meetings with external stakeholders.....	6
Findings	7
Standard one: Admissions.....	7
Standard two: Learning environment	9
Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....	11
Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....	15
Standard five: Supporting students	19
Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register	21
Proposed outcome.....	23
Conditions	23
Annex 1: Education and training standards summary.....	24
Regulator decision	31
Annex 2: Meeting of conditions.....	32
Findings	32

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 three to four 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.
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. University of Worcester's BA(Hons) Social Work 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	UWORR1
Course provider	University of Worcester
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA(Hons) Social Work Reapproval of current course Approval of updated course
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	30
Date of inspection	4 April to 6 April 2023
Inspection team	John Armitage, Education Quality Assurance Officer Anne Mackay, Registrant Inspector Glenn Mathieson, Lay Inspector
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	TO BE ADDED

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Worcester as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the BA(Hons) Social Work as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. An inspection took place from 4 April to 6 April 2023 at St. John's Campus in Worcester where the University of Worcester's Department of Social Work and Community is based. 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 BA Social Work students across the different years of study. Discussions included assessments and feedback, practice placements, academic and pastoral support and multidisciplinary learning opportunities. Inspectors also met with a group of recent graduates from the course who were currently employed as Social Workers within local employers, to discuss their experience of transitioning from BA student to registered Social Worker.

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, placements coordination team, central support teams and senior staff members in the Department of Social Work and Community.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the course, as members of the IMPACT group. Discussions included their experiences of working with the course team and students, the specific ways they have been involved in developing course improvements, and the support and training they receive from the university to perform these activities.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Worcester and Herefordshire Local Authorities and representatives of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The university provided documentary evidence relating to the admissions process and the wider university support for these processes, including describing how English language skills are determined. The inspection team met with members of the course team and other staff involved in admissions who confirmed the range and relevance of assessment methods used including a selection day with three elements: an individual interviews, a group exercise and a written test.

26. Inspectors were informed that the admissions selection day takes place online and that the university continue to monitor the suitability of this processes; the course team have recently consulted with students and determined a strong preference from them to keep this process online. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

27. The university provided inspectors with policy documentation describing how the recognition of prior learning claims are considered, including the Selection Process Guide which includes a precise work experience requirement.

28. Inspectors confirmed the details with the course team who clarified the processes to do this at interview and personal statement review, and a description of how panel members meet to discuss each candidate to ensure consistency of decision making within their individual scoring. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. The inspection team met with placement providers and people with lived experience of social work to confirm their involvement in the admissions process as mentioned within the Selection Process Guide provided by the university. Members of the IMPACT group of people with lived experience of social work are involved in the admissions process and described their role in the interview and assessment process. IMPACT group members provided examples of how the course team involved them individually in decision making for candidate selection, and also how the group was consulted in the design and development of the selection processes themselves.

30. The admissions team staff confirmed to inspectors that the university now employs the services of consultant social workers in their selection days to be involved in assessment panels alongside a staff member and a member of the IMPACT team, as well as providing an evaluation of the day's processes. Inspectors confirmed with employers that they had awareness or direct involvement in doing this as well as involvement in the DBS decision process for applicants. Representatives from the West Midlands Teaching Partnership outlined how they include the university's admissions process as an aspect of the course that they monitor and discuss. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

31. The university demonstrated the process to assess suitability of applicant's character, conduct and health through evidence submitted, and during the inspection meetings. This included evidence of DBS checks and health and conduct checks and declarations, dealt with by staff not involved in the selection process, with clear detail around how criminal convictions are considered.

32. The inspectors confirmed details of the policy for the assessment of health during the inspection visit. Students were clear about their awareness of support available during the process for applicants who may have individual health or learning needs, and how students had the opportunity to enquire about these needs during open days. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

33. The course provider provided documentary evidence relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies prior to inspection which was reviewed by the inspection team. This included information about prerequisite EDI training for staff and IMPACT group members involved in admissions selection days.

34. Inspectors discussed this training with admissions staff and IMPACT members who confirmed that these processes took place and although refresher training had been intermittent since the COVID-19 pandemic, the new IMPACT coordinator had identified this refresher training as a priority to address.

35. Admissions staff confirmed how requests or concerns raised during an application would be followed up with suitable support for applicants. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

36. The university's webpage for the course highlights entry requirements and additional information such as DBS and health checks. The inspection team was informed of additional methods that applicants could obtain information, such as requesting a prospectus, open days and direct enquiry.

37. When the inspection team met with students, this group confirmed that they had all the information they needed to make an informed choice about taking a place up with the University of Worcester and that the course met their expectations from the information provided. Several students expressed how they had multiple offers from universities and chose Worcester in part because of how informative they found the university's documentation and staff. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

38. Prior to the inspection visit the university provided the inspection team with course handbooks for recent years which described what students should expect from placements and the number of placement days. Inspectors confirmed that students are made aware of their expectations including with placements occurring outside of term time.

39. The inspection team agreed that the university sufficiently evidenced that all students would be able to access suitable contrasting placements that would meet the requirements of this standard. Inspectors were satisfied from their discussions with the course team and current students that placements provided students with a suitable degree of experience with statutory social work tasks. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

40. Inspectors reviewed relevant documentary evidence including the Programme Specification and module information for practice skills and practice placements, which detailed how students are expected to achieve the required learning outcomes for this standard. Students are offered an appropriate range of learning opportunities, that they evidence via portfolio. Learning outcomes have appropriate differentiation between the first and second placements. Inspectors were satisfied that these outcomes were being achieved after meeting with students to discuss this.

41. Employers described different ways that the course team monitored how placements were meeting the learning needs of students. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

42. Inspectors were able to review documentation evidencing this standard including the Placement Agency profiles that confirmed appropriate student induction processes are agreed. Other agreement documentation detailed the responsibilities of different parties for student supervision and support.

43. Practice Educators confirmed to inspectors the process of attending a Joint Practice Briefing along with students, the student's personal tutor and the onsite supervisor as part

of placement preparation, where responsibilities are confirmed. Any student health or additional learning needs are discussed here and formally reviewed at the midpoint review meeting. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

44. The inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence and processes for auditing placements to determine how students are matched to practice placements and how the university monitors the ongoing suitability of the placement environment for the students. The Practice Portfolio module documentation provides clear information to all parties on the milestones in placements including the initial placement learning agreement meeting, midway report and final review. Information is also provided on the professional frameworks used to assess students.

45. The inspection team confirmed with the course team the learning and processes in place for ensuring students are aware of what responsibilities they should expect and how they can raise any concerns with their experience of this on placement. From meetings with students, Practice Educators and employers, inspectors were provided examples of these processes working as described. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

46. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence provided in relation to students' assessed preparation for practice. Inspectors agreed that learning outcomes are clear in respect of readiness to practice and placement modules. Students are offered an appropriate range of opportunities, that they need to evidence via portfolio. The relevant standards frameworks have been mapped to all programme modules, with Practice Educators expressing their confidence in students having knowledge of these standards at the beginning of placements. IMPACT members are involved in the readiness to practice assessment process.

47. Inspectors met with employers and Practice Educators who spoke to inspectors about Worcester students being clear about their responsibilities and expectations on beginning placements. These groups identified that when individual students struggled on placement, this was often concerned how individual students approached the demands of the placement environment. Inspectors confirmed information from the course team that student resilience was being addressed in their practice preparation. For example, students were being asked to prepare a resilience plan, with support on placement tailored to elements of this plan. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

48. The course provider provided documentation to evidence how Practice Educators matched to students on practice placement are audited when the university works with a

new placement agency or new Practice Educators. Inspectors confirmed these processes operated as described from meetings with practice placement staff and Practice Educators themselves.

49. The inspection team heard from these groups how Practice Educators were offered training opportunities directly with the university or via the Teaching Partnership. This provided the university with a level of confidence in the currency of the skills of Practice Educators, with information available to them about those who had taken up this training. They also have systems in place for Practice Tutors to identify issues with Practice Educators on the placement meetings between students, Tutors and Practice Educators.

50. However, the university was unable to suitably evidence how they consistently ensured the currency of Practice Educators' knowledge, skills and Social Work England registration status of all Practice Educators they were using after the initial auditing process. The inspectors agreed that the university should develop their processes or agreements with practice placement providers to ensure that Practice Educators are suitably qualified and trained when matched with a student.

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

Standard 2.7

52. The inspection team reviewed the whistleblowing process information within the course handbook and the Student Conduct, Health and Safety agreement, along with the Student Duty of Care expectations. Students stated their awareness of the whistleblowing procedure when questioned by inspectors and knew how to report relevant concerns to placement or university staff. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

53. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted which included the course team CVs and management governance structure, including the university's decision making interaction with the Teaching Partnership. Documentary evidence was provided of strategic student numbers planning and course evaluation report quality assurance activity for different years.

54. Meeting with the senior management team confirmed the roles and responsibilities for monitoring, evaluating and developing the course. Inspectors saw and heard evidence of how the course team were involved in the Teaching Partnership and the local Integrated Care System partnership to enhance their planning of student cohort numbers, placement provision and course content. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

55. As well as reviewing placement agreement and auditing documentation, the inspection team discussed with various university staff groups and employers how the course staff and the Practice Facilitator regularly discuss and review the suitability of placement settings with placement providers. This includes regular staff meetings with placement provider representatives at the Practice Learning Forum and regular Placement Coordinator Meetings within the Teaching Partnership.

56. Inspectors were able to confirm with different groups the process for placement audit and processes in place in case of student problems on placement, and found this to be understood and supported by all parties. When meeting with students and Practice Educators, these groups were able to give examples of university support and placement adjustments to ensure that learning needs were being met. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

57. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted including placement auditing, the placement learning handbook and Occupational Health Assessment information. Policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk and the support available for students was presented to inspectors, with an indication of what support is available for students.

58. Students complete an occupational health check which captures additional needs and, when required, is used when matching students to placements to ensure the placement partner can meet those needs. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

59. From the documentary evidence provided and from meeting with different staff and partner groups during the inspection visit, inspectors were assured that the university make effective use of partnership working with employers, including within the West Midlands Teaching Partnership and the Integrated Care System for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Involvement of employers in the management and monitoring of courses was evidenced in a variety of ways including in defined regular meeting structures. The inspection team were informed of how employer feedback from these groups had directly influenced the development of the updated course, to make it more relevant to the needs of employers.

60. Inspectors confirmed with employer representatives that these partnership meeting structures were not the only way to communicate with the course team about the course, with other employers not part of the Teaching Partnership describing their input into admissions, the DBS decision process, Practice Educator training and involvement in teaching sessions for students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

61. In addition to quality assurance processes and partnership meeting arrangements mentioned in Standards 3.1 to 3.4 above, the inspection team reviewed documentation pertaining to the student Course Evaluation Survey, Staff Student Liaison Committee involving feedback from students and IMPACT group members, and Annual Evaluation reporting that information from these meetings feed into. The course team and course management were able to provide examples to inspectors how monitoring and auditing activity of information about students and placements is effectively captured and evaluated.

62. Inspectors spoke to different groups during the inspection visit and confirmed that placement partners, students and people with lived experience are formally and regularly engaged in course monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems, and each group expressed confidence that the course team meaningfully engage with them and act upon their feedback and other input. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

63. From the inspection team meeting with the course senior management and placement providers, the university demonstrated how they work with their formal partnerships to monitor and develop placement provision with clear planning meeting groups to ensure each year has sufficient placement capacity. The student cohort size for the course remains stable with sufficient staff capacity for current and planned student numbers.

64. Inspectors reviewed documentation including the Workforce Analytics document from the Teaching Partnership Workforce Planning working group. Representatives from the Teaching Partnership confirmed details of their involvement in the planning for student numbers, linked to placement capacity. Employers present were involved in the Social Work Steering Group where the university captures local student and staff recruitment and planning needs. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

65. Inspectors were supplied with satisfactory information to confirm that the course leader for the BA is a qualified social worker and registered with Social Work England. Inspectors confirmed throughout the inspection visit how the course lead held and demonstrated necessary professional responsibility. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

66. Throughout the inspection visit the inspection team heard of how the course has been updated to address updated teaching and learning needs and how the course team themselves maintain their currency of subject knowledge and links to contemporary practice. This is enhanced from their employer partnership links that enable the course team to have regular collaboration with Practice Educators and other practitioners.

67. The course team confirmed that they are suitably resourced and supported by senior management to work on CPD and research projects relevant to Social Work. The knowledge and expertise of each of the team was described in the documentation and course team discussions, with students satisfied with the course content relevance to practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

68. The inspection team reviewed course evaluation reports which indicated how student progression data was recorded and evaluated. This included information at the course level about trends in progression of students from different demographics. Discussion about this with the course senior management team confirmed this reporting and evaluation considers student EDI data from application stage and student progress is tracked from application and induction through to the end of the course.

69. The university heard from course staff and employers how it is working closely with employer partners to look at continued trends of their students as they progress into employment and ASYE, in order to better understand how the course can continue to be adapted to address issues with workforce retention in the early career of newly qualified social workers. Sessions about resilience within skills days, readiness to practice learning and wellbeing support on placement are some actions that the university has taken as a result of this collaborative work based on analysing student information. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

70. Staff CVs were made available for the inspection team to review which evidenced appropriate experience and a broad range of staff interests and specialisms. Further evidence was provided and discussed with the course team regarding different research projects that staff are involved in. Course staff are provided opportunities with social work practitioners in children and adult services to maintain currency of their practice knowledge.

71. The Teaching Partnership and other evidenced employer discussion forums provide opportunities for staff to be involved in discussions about contemporary practice with local employers as well as providing research opportunities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

72. The university provided inspectors with a clear understanding of the course curriculum via documentation provided prior to the inspection visit and presenting this information during the visit. Inspectors agreed that the curriculum content and mapping to professional standards was comprehensive.

73. The course team provided inspectors with details and rationale for the course changes, which include changes to assessments and an increased focus on student wellbeing. The team were able to describe and provide documentation how these course development decisions had been made and the systems in place to implement these changes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

74. The course team demonstrated how the university makes good use of The West Midlands Teaching Partnership in collaborating with employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work in formal meetings and projects regarding aspects affecting the course. These include discussions around admissions processes; simplifying placement documentation for Practice Educators who work across different universities in the Partnership; providing guest practitioners for teaching and learning sessions including skills days; and input into the recent course development plans. The inspection team were able to confirm this range of involvement from meetings with representatives from these different groups.

75. The IMPACT group of people with lived experience of social work is an organised group with regular meetings, coordinated by a member of the course staff who has a dedicated number of hours to perform this role. There is another staff member who works with members of the group exclusively with involvement in research projects. The IMPACT group provided examples of involvement at interview, teaching and learning and assessments, as well as influencing the development of specific elements within some modules including enhancing clarity of documentation for students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

76. The inspection team, after reviewing the university's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies, was satisfied that the course had been designed in accordance with those policies. The course team demonstrated that they had the necessary support mechanisms in place to ensure inclusion and reasonable adjustments in all settings. The EDI principles of the course are made clear to students across handbooks and module materials.

77. The course developments around student wellbeing, particularly regarding readiness for practice and the placement modules, have developed the course focus on inclusion and evaluating relevant datasets beyond graduation from their work with employers looking at recruitment and retention issues. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

78. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence and spoke to the course team and senior management to understand how the involvement of course staff in opportunities mentioned in Standards 3.8 and 3.10 reflect in the current and updated courses. Inspectors reviewed documentary evidence about how team members are involved with Teaching Partnership projects and how learning from these initiatives have been integrated within the programme. This included information about how the Teaching Partnership has an initiative to support academics across its university members who wish to update their practice experience.

79. Inspectors had opportunity to confirm with the course team examples provided in the document evidence submission about specific updates to the course content based on staff CPD learning and research, and their involvement with employers and practitioners. Students stated that they thought the course content was engaging and relevant to contemporary practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

80. The inspection team reviewed individual module details for the course provided by the university. This demonstrated precisely where theory and practice linked to assessment and associated learning outcomes. The course team were able to provide further detail to inspectors during the inspection visit including rationale for updates to course content as a result of student and employer feedback on ensuring students are suitably prepared to apply learned theory and law to practice placements.

81. Students expressed to the inspectors that they felt suitably prepared from the course to apply their learning to practice placement experiences. Practice Educators confirmed that Worcester students are able to apply their learning to placement experiences. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

82. The inspectors spoke with course staff and students about opportunities for multidisciplinary learning within the taught content of the course. Inspectors were provided with documentation of sessions planned into modules and students were able to recall different sessions that they found valuable.

83. As well as documented plans provided, examples were described during inspection of strong links to other professional courses within the university covering both children and

adult services. The course team run different simulated healthcare skills sessions with care professionals, nursing students and policing students. Year 3 BA students and MA students take part in a law court simulated session with involvement from Bond Solon. Students experience a wide range of opportunities to work with students from other professions and learn from qualified professionals. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

84. The university presented the inspection team with information about the overall university academic credit framework that determines structured academic study time, and how the course team have applied that to the programme content in the Programme Specification document.

85. Meetings took place with course staff, students and practice educators, who described the balance of learning activities in the course to be suitable to develop the required competencies. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

86. Inspectors reviewed documentation of assessments for each module provided by the university prior to the inspection visit. The course refers to assessment strategies for each module with an overview summary within the Programme Specification. The university Assessment Policy was and demonstrated how the course assessments align with this policy requirement.

87. The course team presented further details on the course modules and assessments that had been adapted in the updated course. The documentary evidence demonstrated internal moderation and External Examiner approval of assessment processes in relation to assessment, marking, moderation and quality assurance processes. All assessments are matched to learning outcomes across the curriculum, and are mapped to PCF and the Social Work England Professional Standards. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

88. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence of assessments progression which included an Award Map within the Programme Specification which sets out the timeline of when and how each module is assessed. The inspection team agreed that the evidence reviewed demonstrated that assessments are carried out at appropriate stages during the course and how assessment information feeds into the university's monitoring and development systems. Inspectors were able to discuss and review documentation regarding the details and rationale behind changes to assessments and assessment timing.

89. The inspection team met with the course team to confirm details of how assessments were discussed and coordinated at regular team discussion days throughout the year.

Students expressed satisfaction with how staff had responded to feedback about assessment timings to prepare them for their placements and manage the workload balance of assessment activity. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

90. Programme Specification and assessment information enabled the inspection team to ascertain types of formal feedback provided to students as well as timeliness standards.

91. Evidence reviewed demonstrated that formative assessment opportunities are identified for each module, and students all received formative assessment after several weeks of starting the course. Students are also given documented feedback from placement activity staff and Practice Educators.

92. Students discussed how there had been some issues regarding feedback detail. Inspectors were able to ascertain that some of the additional measures of moderating team feedback and adjusting assessment timings was as a result of addressing issues of feedback quality. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

93. The inspection team reviewed documentation including staff CVs and External Examiner information including procedures and policy. Inspectors agreed that the course team are experienced academics who have undertaken further training on assessment, and several also act as External Examiners to other universities.

94. The External Examiner for this course is also experienced and on the register, and provides meaningful challenge to the team, as evidenced in their reports. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

95. Discussions with students, course team and senior management assured the inspection team that there are systems to manage students' progression and that these were effectively used and managed. There are appropriate processes in place for holding regular Subject Exam Boards within the programme and for confirming grades and awards on an annual basis.

96. Practice Educators are supported to undertake assessment, and practice placement modules grades are also reviewed at the Subject Exam Board. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

97. From module documentation, course team CVs and discussions with the course team, the inspection team agreed that research is embedded into the course delivery. There are

two research based modules and students are assessed on their ability to understand research based practice and reflect on their experiences. Some of this work involves sessions with members of the IMPACT group. Skills days sessions are planned to enhance this learning and reflection.

98. Relevant academic support for students includes study skills sessions for students that includes one to one sessions to address individual learning needs and academic experience, and encourages them to develop their skills and approach to practice. Students expressed engagement and suitable support with this area. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

99. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence and university website links prior to inspection that outlined a range of advice and support services designed to meet both the academic and pastoral needs of all students. As well as the roles of Personal Tutors and Practice Educators, these services include counselling and mental health services, a careers and development service, disability support, and student finance and funding.

100. There is also a student wellbeing team staffed by counsellors and mental health practitioners. The inspection team heard about the role of the first point student hub that students can get immediate advice about any academic or pastoral enquiry or signposted towards the most suitable service for them. There is a team of disability advisors offering support to those with learning needs such as dyslexia or different physical learning needs. There is a student counselling team accredited by the professional body, which can support students via referrals to counsellors, mental health practitioners or external services.

101. Students were positive about the range of support available from central services, with some experiences of approaching these services or being directed to them after discussing issues with Personal Tutors. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

102. The university provided documentation about how the Personal Academic Tutoring system works for students on the teaching and learning content of the course and for when students are attending their practice placements. Personal Tutors have access to specific training and have clear information about their role responsibilities. Tutors can signpost to the different support services described in Standard 5.1. Students expressed satisfaction with the support they received from their Personal Tutors at different stages of the course.

103. The inspectors met with the Academic Liaison Librarian team about how they directly support the course staff as well as students. These staff operate as a clear link between

central academic services and disability support and the course team, helping provide induction sessions on university resources and access to items such as alternative texts. Inspectors were also informed about the use of the Blackboard Ally element of the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment system that allows course teams to confidently ensure their teaching materials are fully accessible and are available in different accessibility formats. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

104. All relevant documentation to check that the university has a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health was provided to inspectors prior to the inspection visit. The inspection team reviewed documents including annual Conduct, Health and Safety agreement that inspectors confirmed with students that they need to sign each year.

105. There is a clear student disciplinary process and course documentation emphasises the need for good conduct and for students to meet the professional standards expected of them. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

106. The course provider was able to thoroughly demonstrate that they are supportive of any reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments from the initial documentary evidence submission. This included central support services for inclusion that were confirmed with representatives of these teams, and commitments within the course documentation.

107. When meeting with the course team, students, Practice Educators, placement providers and specialist support staff the inspection team were always provided with different examples of support that had been made available to students and that followed the processes as described in documents. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

108. Students are provided with course and placement handbooks which contain information about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker, and students expressed clear knowledge and understanding of this information. Inspectors were able to discuss with different staff how information was provided to students on their VLE systems. Inspectors were assured of a careers service that was relevant to the students on this course.

109. Inspectors considered there to be comprehensive information provided before admission and during course in the placement and course handbooks, as well as regular feedback on progress through the course. Students and recent graduates expressed

satisfaction about the information provided throughout the course and the experiences of working with and learning from people involved in practice. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

110. The inspection team reviewed information in documents provided to students about mandatory attendance. The inspectors agreed that the course handbook clearly set out mandatory elements, placement requirements, how absences are monitored and how days missed should be made up. There is also a clearly documented process for a student to notify a placement provider of sickness or similar. The course team and management regularly review attendance data.

111. Students confirmed their awareness of the mandatory elements of the course and consequences of non-attendance, as well as how to access support available to students if they are concerned about personal issues that may have an impact on attendance. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

112. As described in standard 4.10, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided and discussed the feedback mechanisms with current students, described clearly in the Assessment Policy. The inspection team heard from students that feedback was provided clearly and when expected, with options provided to students about following up on the feedback given.

113. The inspection team heard from the course team and students' various activities, further details about formative feedback that is planned into the course within the first few weeks as well as for each module. Practice educators confirmed that they provide ongoing feedback on regular supervision sessions and are able to engage the university's practice placement team or the student's Personal Tutor if feedback needs to be discussed further. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

114. The inspection team reviewed the university academic appeals policy that is available to students via course resources and on the university website. Inspectors confirmed with the course senior management and with students that different parties were clear about how to access the policy and what its processes involve. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

115. As the qualifying course is a BA(Hons) in Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was 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	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that the currency of Practice Educator training and CPD is regularly audited, by developing their agreements with practice placement providers to regularly audit Practice Educators for relevant training and CPD, or performing this auditing themselves. This condition applies to both the current and updated version of the course.	31 August 2023	Paragraph 51

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 – condition applied	Recommendation given
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

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](#).

A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken and recommendations will be made to Social Work England's decision maker.

This section of the report will be completed when the conditions review is completed.

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that the currency of Practice Educator training and CPD is regularly audited, by developing their agreements with practice placement providers to regularly audit Practice Educators for relevant training and CPD, or performing this auditing themselves. This condition applies to both the current and updated version of the course.	The condition is met.

Findings

The course provider responded to the above condition providing a Practice Education Registration Process, Practice Educator Registration Form and a Practice Educator Register Template. They advised that the collection of data will be the responsibility of the Practice Facilitator working closely with the universities central support team and the Placement Support Team who will keep the records centrally on the secure platform ARC. The data will be collected via the use of a Microsoft Form (Practice Educator Registration Form) which is linked to the ARC system and will automatically update the Practice Educator Register. A report will be produced annually for audit and update.

The inspectors have reviewed the evidence submitted and acknowledge that there hasn't yet been the opportunity to ensure that the information is received and reviewed, but do recommend that the condition is met.

Regulator decision

Approved.