

Inspection Report

UBRIR1_BCP324	UBRIR1_B
COURSE PROVIDER	University of Brighton
VALIDATING BODY (IF DIFFERENT)	
COURSE INSPECTED	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards: Skills and Assessment
MODE OF STUDY	Part Time
MAXIMUM STUDENT COHORT	30
DATE OF INSPECTION	02 December 2025 – 03 December 2025
INSPECTION TEAM	Katie Parkin (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Lyn Westcott (Lay Inspector) Cora Beard BIA/AMHP registrant Inspector)
INSPECTOR RECOMMENDATION	Approved with conditions
REGULATOR DECISION:	Approved with conditions
DATE OF REGULATOR DECISION:	20.03.26
CONDITIONS TABLE	Conditions
DATE CONDITIONS MET	04.06.26

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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 approval standards for Best Interests Assessor (BIA) courses. We approve courses against these standards to ensure that students who successfully complete a BIA course can meet the requirements set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Schedule A1 and 1A, the Mental Capacity (Deprivation of Liberty: Standard Authorisations, Assessments and Ordinary Residence) Regulations 2008 and the 6 BIA capabilities as described in Annex 1 to the education and training approval standards for Best Interests Assessor (BIA) courses.
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. This will include a registered inspector who will be a qualified BIA, and a lay inspector who is not BIA qualified.
3. These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review documentary information and evidence, and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, observations, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
4. The process we undertake is described in our legislation: The Children and Social Work Act 2017, [The Social Workers Regulations 2018 - Social Work England](#) , and our [Education and Training Rules 2019](#).
5. In this document we describe University of Brighton as ‘the course provider’ and we describe the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards: Skills and Assessment as ‘the course’.

Summary of Inspection

6. University of Brighton and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards: Skills and Assessment was inspected as part of Social Work England’s reapproval cycle, whereby all course providers with BIA courses will be inspected against the new education and training approval standards for BIA courses.
7. A remote inspection took place from 02 to 03 December 2025.
8. As part of this process the inspection team gathered feedback from key stakeholders through meetings on inspection. This included employer partners, students, people with lived experience and associate lectures.

Inspection Findings

9. In this section we set out the inspectors' findings in relation to whether the course meets the education and training approval standards for BIA courses. We describe the inspection team in this section as 'we'.

Standard 1. Admissions	Met or not met.
<p>1.1 Confirm that applicants have:</p> <p>i. the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the 6 BIA capabilities set out in Annex 1 of these standards.</p> <p>ii. the potential to meet the eligibility criteria for the role set out in the relevant legislation governing BIA practice.</p> <p>iii. the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.2 Confirm that applicants are and remain fully registered with a relevant regulatory body in line with the relevant regulations.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.3 Confirm that applicants have, and can demonstrate, suitable prior experience of the practical application of appropriate legislation and policy, specifically including but not limited to mental capacity, mental health and human rights legislation, and demonstrable experience of understanding risk in relation to these.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.4 Confirm that applicants have a robust level of legal literacy in appropriate legislative and policy areas.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.5 Ensure that employers, providers of observation opportunities, people with lived experience, and carers are involved in admissions processes.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.6 Ensure that the admissions processes include assessment of the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes appropriate criminal conviction checks.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.7 Ensure that there are equality, diversity and inclusion policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>1.8 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place. This will include information about the award level and professional qualification, course content, teaching modes, location of study, assessment methods, duration, and observation requirements including the expectations around arranging or securing observation opportunities.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p><u>Key observations for standard 1</u></p> <p>10. A range of application materials were provided to the inspection team, including a redacted application form, interview questions, and the applicant</p>	

information pack. We saw that as part of the application process, applicants were asked to provide details of their employment history, relevant qualifications, professional registration, and a written essay outlining their experience. This enabled the admissions team to consider applicants' prior knowledge and experience at an early stage. In doing so, we were assured that the admissions process enabled consideration of applicants' potential to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the six BIA capabilities, as well as their potential to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the relevant legislation governing BIA practice (1.1, 1.3, 1.4)

11. We viewed the interview scoring documentation and were told that the panel met before and after interviews to discuss expectations and calibrate decision making. Experts by Experience (EBEs) confirmed they received training before participating in the interview process, focusing on unconscious bias and other equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) topics. (1.5, 1.6, 1.7)

12. While the admissions system was operating effectively, the scoring system for interviews with a matrix of unsatisfactory to excellent had no written guidance around what a satisfactory answer would look like and how the benchmark for determining the acceptability of applications was set. We felt that introducing clear and explicit benchmarks for each scoring band, including defined criteria for what constitutes an excellent application or interview and the benchmark for progression to interview, would further strengthen fairness, transparency and consistency across all admissions decisions. A recommendation has been set to address this. (1.6)

13. In relation to professional registration, we sought assurance that all applicants are and remain fully registered with an appropriate regulatory body in line with the relevant regulations. Admissions staff were able to confirm that registration was checked at the point of application. For sponsored applicants, employers also confirmed registration before referring staff to the course. Independent applicants must provide evidence of registration as part of their submission. (1.2)

14. We viewed processes for assessing applicants' prior relevant experience. The application essay provided applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate their use of relevant legislation and policy in their current roles, and interview questions further explored this. We agreed that this evidenced a strong and structured approach to assessing applicants' experience, including employer or manager approval confirming applicants' suitability and ability to meet the course requirements. (1.3, 1.4)

<p>15. We considered applicants’ understanding of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA). Applicants received MCA related information in their module pack, supporting them to articulate their legislative knowledge. The provider also offered introductory MCA training for applicants who may be less familiar with the Act prior to starting the programme. We were reassured that applicants were appropriately supported to meet this requirement. (Standards 1.1 ,1.4)</p> <p>16. In relation to stakeholder involvement, we found clear evidence of employer participation in admissions. Employers described being well involved and reported attending events such as employer engagement sessions and standard reviews. EBEs also confirmed they had received interview training and had participated in the admissions process. We were assured that both groups were appropriately supported and engaged. (Standard 1.5)</p> <p>17. We explored how applicants’ conduct, character and health were considered. The course provider confirmed they have a requirement for enhanced DBS checks to be within three years of enrolment; applicants with older checks were required to obtain a new one. Applicants are asked to confirm their DBS certificate number and date of certification, and employers confirm that the DBS is valid under the employer’s policy. In such cases, the course provider may request a new DBS, but will not require this where the employing local authority confirms the existing check remains valid. On this basis, we were satisfied that the provider had appropriate oversight of safeguarding requirements. (Standard 1.6)</p> <p>18. In relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), the provider confirmed that EDI information was not screened during admissions to avoid introducing bias. However, the team analysed EDI data following completion of the course to identify any patterns in pass or fail rates. Admissions processes were described as accessible to a wide range of applicants, and examples were provided where reasonable adjustments had been made. (1.7)</p> <p>19. We reviewed information provided to applicants. Course requirements, expectations and preparatory information were provided either through the employer or directly from the university for independent applicants. We agreed that applicants received sufficient information to make an informed decision about whether to take up a place on the programme. (Standard 1.8)</p>	
<p><u>Standard 2. Course governance, management and quality.</u></p>	
<p>2.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and</p>	<p>MET</p>

governing groups in the delivering, resourcing and managing the quality of the course.	
2.2 Ensure that effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, people with relevant lived experience including carers, and students.	<u>MET</u>
2.3 Ensure that admissions are aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of: i. wherever appropriate, local and regional capacity for observation opportunities; and ii. the availability of part-time or other flexible course arrangements to widen access wherever possible.	<u>MET</u>
2.4 Ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the course is a relevant qualified professional (social worker, occupational therapist, psychologist or nurse) with appropriate experience of BIA practice.	<u>MET</u>
2.5 Ensure that there is adequate provision of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.	<u>MET</u>
2.6 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to mental capacity, mental health and human rights legislation and policy, including recent developments, and the practical application of this via the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, including giving support to undertake continuing professional development relevant to their role.	<u>MET</u>
2.7 Ensure that students have the opportunity to provide feedback about the course and that this feedback is analysed, shared with employers and others involved in commissioning places on the course, and used to inform the management and development of the course.	<u>MET</u>
<p><u>Key observations for standard 2.</u></p> <p>20. We were provided with a presentation outlining the governance structure of the university and how the BIA module fitted within the wider academic framework. The subject lead described how they work closely with the programme lead to ensure effective oversight of the module. We were satisfied that there were clear leadership and reporting arrangements in place. (Standard 2.1)</p> <p>21. The course team described the training and preparation staff must complete before they are able to mark assessments, which supports a robust and consistent marking practice. Workload management arrangements were discussed, including how staff can provide cover for colleagues where required. The team has also provided an example of how the timing of the module delivery</p>	

had previously been adjusted to accommodate staffing availability, demonstrating flexibility in course planning and delivery. (2.5, 2.6)

22. We were informed that the external examiner undertakes a course-level review which includes the BIA module, with module-level review undertaken internally by the Programme Lead and feeding into the wider course review process We were satisfied that these arrangements provide appropriate external oversight and assurance of academic standards. (2.1, 2.2)

23. We heard about regular engagement with employers, including consultation regarding changes made to the module to align with the revised BIA standards. EBEs described being actively involved in the redesign of the module, and this was supported by documentary evidence. While stakeholder involvement was evident, we identified an opportunity to strengthen how this input is evaluated. A recommendation has therefore been set for the course provider to consider and implement an effective, module-specific approach to evaluating EBE and BIA observer contributions. (2.2)

24. The University holds regular planning meetings with employer representatives to discuss the requirements of the module and their implications for employers, including arrangements for supported observations. Continuing professional development requirements for the regional BIA workforce are also discussed through CPD Management Group meetings. As part of implementing the revised standards, the University held additional planning meetings with employer representatives to discuss the requirements and agree observation arrangements. These discussions also inform the University's admissions planning, enabling cohort size and intake decisions to be aligned with regional capacity for supported observations and employer availability. (2.2, 2.3)

25. We reviewed the BIA Module Application Pack, which includes a Supported Observation Agreement. This confirms managerial agreement for named students to undertake BIA assessments supported by a qualified BIA within their team. It also clarifies that the qualified BIA retains ultimate responsibility for the assessment and confirms that the observer will complete the required observation documentation to support the student's learning.

26. For self-funded students, the application pack clearly sets out the expectation that applicants must arrange their own observations with DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) supervisory bodies prior to applying. These requirements form part of a clear admissions approach which ensures that applicants have access to appropriate observation opportunities prior to commencing the module. We

<p>were satisfied that expectations for both sponsored and independent applicants were clearly communicated. (2.3, 2.5)</p> <p>27. The BIA module is delivered over eight days across three weeks, and employers confirmed that they support staff to attend. The course team have extended the course for this year's cohort after feedback from students that the course was too short. The course team described how the structure and timing of the delivery are kept under review to support access, including consideration of employer needs and the feasibility of alternative or flexible delivery arrangements where appropriate. (2.2, 2.3)</p> <p>28. We were satisfied that the BIA module is led by a qualified social worker who is also a qualified BIA. Evidence was provided demonstrating that the Module Lead maintains up to date knowledge through ongoing professional development, including BIA refresher training. The course team also includes additional BIA qualified staff, and the use of hourly paid lecturers enables gaps in expertise to be addressed. The team provided an example where the module delivery date was adjusted to ensure the availability of appropriately qualified staff. (2.4, 2.5, 2.6)</p> <p>29. Responsibility for ensuring the appropriate mix and level of staffing sits with the Team Lead, who described drawing on established professional networks within local authorities. A learning partnership agreement provides access to a pool of suitably qualified staff, and the inspection team were assured that staff involved in delivery maintain current CPD. Support for educator CPD includes access to refresher training, regional CPD forums and opportunities to engage with current practice issues through employer and BIA networks. Ongoing engagement with employers and BIAs also supports the course's responsiveness to regional priorities, as evidenced through CPD Management Group meetings. (2.5, 2.6)</p> <p>30. We heard that the BIA module is a 20-credit, Level 7 postgraduate module. Changes to the course have been informed by both written and verbal student feedback. The length of the module's timetabled learning and teaching has been amended in response to this feedback, demonstrating responsiveness to the student experience. Opportunities for student representation are offered, although the short duration of the module means a representative is not always appointed. Students are able to raise questions throughout the course using Padlet, and consultation on assessment changes has been shared with students. Marking criteria are also made available to support transparency and clarity. (2.2, 2.7)</p>	
<p>Standard 3. Observation opportunities.</p>	<p>Met or not met</p>

<p>3.1 Ensure that each student has the opportunity to undertake a minimum of 2 practice observation opportunities which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. enables the student to shadow a BIA or community DoLS assessment. ii. provide practice experience that can be applied to a variety of settings and types of supervisory body. iii. enables the student to observe a suitably qualified and experienced relevant qualified professional who has relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to demonstrate safe and effective practice. iv. enables the student to produce a detailed analysis of relevant practice issues which forms part of the student’s overall assessment. 	<u>MET</u>
<p>3.2 Ensure that the number, duration and range of observation opportunities is appropriate to support the delivery of the course and the achievement of the learning outcomes.</p>	<u>MET</u>
<p>3.3 Maintain clear collaborative arrangements for planning and communication with providers including a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all observation opportunities.</p>	<u>NOT MET</u>
<p><u>Key observations for standard 3.</u></p> <p>31. We were satisfied that the University has ensured the number, duration and range of observation opportunities were appropriate to support delivery of the BIA module and achievement of the learning outcomes. Students were required to complete two direct observations, as set out in the Module Specification and in the BIA Module Application Pack. We were also reassured that the 30 hour observation requirement appropriately recognises all related learning activity, including preparation, direct observation, post observation write up and reflective debrief.</p> <p>32. We heard about ongoing engagement with employers regarding observation arrangements, including discussions about the importance of contrast in observation experiences and what this may look like in practice. Documentary evidence showed where changes to the course were outlined and employers were invited to provide feedback on observation requirements, workforce capacity and future needs. Consideration of shadowing and direct observations forms part of these discussions. (3.1, 3.2)</p> <p>33. The course team described a session that will be held in February 2026 to support observers and to clarify expectations around observation practice. While this was welcomed, employers indicated that additional guidance would be</p>	

<p>beneficial, particularly to ensure a shared understanding of what constitutes contrasting observations and how this should be implemented consistently, recognising that opportunities are influenced by employer capacity and allocation policies. We therefore identified a recommendation applicable to standards 3.1 and 3.2 for the course provider to develop clearer written guidance for relevant stakeholders to support consistent and high quality observation experiences.</p> <p>34. We were satisfied that there were appropriate arrangements in place for both employer sponsored and independent applicants. Independent applicants were required to secure confirmation of observation opportunities from an organisation prior to applying, and this must be approved by the Module Lead. Observers receive training input from the University prior to undertaking the role, which supports clarity of expectations and feedback. (3.1, 3.3)</p> <p>35. However, in relation to ethical considerations and consent, we were not fully assured. While the course team explained that consent is sought from service users prior to observation and that capacity is considered, observers reported that they would benefit from clearer guidance on how consent should be obtained, recorded and managed, particularly where consent cannot be obtained or is withdrawn. We did not see sufficient evidence that the University is consistently advising or monitoring how consent is addressed across all observation settings. (3.3)</p> <p>36. A condition has therefore been set against standard 3.3 requiring the course provider to clearly define, communicate and monitor how ethical considerations and appropriate consent are agreed and recorded between the BIA observer, student and service user or other relevant parties. (3.3)</p>	
<p>Standard 4. Curriculum and assessment</p>	<p>Met or not met</p>
<p>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 requirements of the role as set out in the 6 BIA capabilities set out at Annex 1, as well as a sound understanding of cross-national border issues in relation to practice in Wales, where this is appropriate.</p>	<p>MET</p>
<p>4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners, people with lived experience of social work and carers are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.</p>	<p>MET</p>
<p>4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and, human rights and legislative frameworks.</p>	<p>MET</p>

4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy, best practice, and case law.	<u>MET</u>
4.5 Ensure that the integration of policy, legal literacy and practice is central to the course.	<u>MET</u>
4.6 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.	<u>MET</u>
4.7 Provide staff involved in leading and delivering the training with sufficient protected training time to keep their own practice and knowledge up to date in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.	<u>MET</u>
4.8 Ensure that assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to make robust, independent and well-evidenced assessments in the best interests of the person. This should include regular monitoring and evaluation of assessment standards to ensure that they remain robust and reliable.	<u>MET</u>
4.9 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	<u>MET</u>
4.10 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to assessment and evaluation, underpinned by skills, knowledge and an ability to interpret and respond appropriately to legislative and policy change and case law.	<u>MET</u>
4.11 Ensure that the course equips students with knowledge and skills in relation to identifying and anticipating areas of conflict arising from DoLS processes and outcomes, and supporting individuals, families, carers and agencies to understand the checks and balances of the DoLS system, to support a robust, independent and well-evidenced determination in the best interests of the person.	<u>MET</u>
4.12 Clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the course.	<u>MET</u>
4.13 Clearly specify that any equivalent award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as a BIA.	<u>MET</u>
4.14 Clearly specify a process for the appointment of at least 1 external examiner who must be an appropriately experienced and relevant qualified professional.	<u>MET</u>

Key observations for standard 4.

37. The course team explained how the BIA capabilities were embedded throughout the module and clearly mapped to the curriculum. They described how the course is delivered at Level 7 and how this was supported through the use of the University's marking rubric and assessment criteria. Students confirmed that they felt confident studying at postgraduate level. One student noted that although they had not studied for some time, they found the course accessible and manageable, which reassured the inspection team that appropriate academic support is in place. The course team also described how teaching and assessment approaches are designed to be inclusive and accessible, enabling students from a range of professional backgrounds to engage with postgraduate-level study. (4.1, 4.3, 4.6)

38. Mandatory training was in place for staff involved in interviewing and assessment, including training on unconscious bias and marking. The course team described strong links with university support services, enabling timely access to support where required. Examples were provided of how students are signposted to services and how learning needs are identified and responded to. These arrangements support equality, diversity and inclusion by ensuring that reasonable adjustments and tailored support can be provided where required. (4.3, 4.7)

39. No concerns were raised by students or staff regarding the currency or relevance of course content. Students reported that the content felt up to date and relevant to practice. The course team described how they regularly met to review developments in case law and policy, and the course lead confirmed that all teaching materials were reviewed to ensure accuracy and relevance. The inspection team noted that the reading list was comprehensive and that students reported having access to a wide range of resources, all of which were available through the University's online library and learning platform. (4.4, 4.10)

40. There was clear evidence that legal literacy and the integration of law, policy and practice underpinned the delivery of the module. This was evidenced through module aims, learning outcomes and content, as well as specific teaching inputs such as DoLS training delivered by a senior lawyer in March 2025. Teaching explicitly addresses the legal and human rights framework underpinning the DoLS system, including proportionality, least restrictive practice and the protection of individual rights. The module is clearly mapped to the BIA standards and capabilities, as demonstrated in the module specification. (=4.1, 4.5, 4.11)

41. We were satisfied that the number of hours dedicated to structured academic learning was sufficient for students to achieve the required level of competence.

As a 20 credit Level 7 module, the university's general examination and assessment regulations and common academic framework indicate a total of 200 learning hours, including approximately 40-50 taught hours. The BIA module delivers 48 taught hours across eight days, with an additional 30 hours allocated to the mid-module observation task. Remaining hours were allocated to guided learning, including preparation, reading, research and assessment. We noted that the module timetable has been developed collaboratively with employers, students and EBEs to ensure learning outcomes are met. (4.6, 4.2)

42. In relation to staffing, permanent staff were allocated pro rata time within their workload allocation CPD and scholarly activity, with contingency arrangements in place where this cannot be accommodated. All staff involved in interviews were trained, and hourly paid staff received briefings from the Programme Lead before and after delivery to ensure they were up to date. The course team described reliance on employers to assure the ongoing CPD of hourly paid staff, with opportunities for these staff to attend University training. EBEs involved in delivery also reported remaining engaged beyond their scheduled sessions due to the relevance of the wider content. (4.7, 4.2)

43. We heard detailed explanations of assessment design and moderation processes. There were clear arrangements in place to ensure consistency in marking, including moderation and calibration across markers. Both formative and summative assessment approaches were used, supported by the University's feedforward policy. Students must meet all assessment components to pass the module. While written assessment is the primary format, a viva voce option was discussed during module consultation and presented on student consultation materials but is not currently offered as an assessment method. Employers had influenced the emphasis on written assessment, recognising this as a key skill for BIA practice. Students reported that the case study and completion of a mock 'Form 3' were particularly valuable in preparing them for practice, with one former student noting that they continued to refer back to this work in their professional role. A standardised case study was recently introduced to support fairness, consistency and reliable evaluation and scoring. (Standards 4.8, 4.3)

44. Given the short duration of the module, opportunities for pre-summative feedback were limited. However, the inspection team noted that feedback is provided on the written essay submitted at the application stage, which enabled students to receive early academic feedback for work completed before commencing the course. Padlet was used to ensure all students can access responses to questions about their assessments, and workshops provided opportunities for students to give feedback directly to the course lead. While one-

<p>to-one sessions were not routinely scheduled, students can request these where needed. A critical reflection log was also embedded within the course to support ongoing learning. (4.9, 4.10)</p> <p>45. Teaching and assessments were clearly designed to support the application of law and policy to practice. This includes extended sessions delivered by a solicitor, practical exercises where students undertake elements of a BIA assessment, and mock completion of statutory documentation. These activities explicitly address the checks and balances within the DoLS system, including managing professional challenge, evidencing best interests decision-making and responding to differing views from families and other agencies These activities supported the development of critical thinking and analytical skills, which are embedded within the University’s assessment criteria. (Standards 4.10, 4.11)</p> <p>46. We were satisfied that course content prepares students effectively for professional practice. Students who had completed the module spoke positively about how well prepared they felt to undertake the BIA role and how learning from the module could be applied in their day-to-day work. We reviewed the University’s online learning environment and confirmed that resources were readily accessible. The course lead confirmed that all content was reviewed to ensure coverage of the required standards, including inter-professional working, which was addressed through a full DoLS assessment session. (4.1, 4.10)</p> <p>47. In relation to awards, we were satisfied that it was clearly specified that there was no equivalent award leading to eligibility as a BIA. The module was a 20-credit standalone provision, and students who do not pass the module do not receive credit and cannot be approved as a BIA. This was clearly set out in the Module Specification. (Standards 4.12, 4.13)</p> <p>48. The inspection team was satisfied that appropriate external examining arrangements are in place. Evidence was provided confirming the appointment of an experienced and appropriately qualified BIA external examiner, in line with University regulations and their External Examiners’ Handbook. External examiner appointments normally ran for four years, with a possible one-year extension to ensure continuity. The University submitted a request to extend the current external examiner’s term by one year to align with the timing of the Social Work England inspection and support continuity of feedback should changes to the module be required. (4.14)</p>	
<p>Standard 5. Supporting students.</p>	<p>Met or not met</p>
<p>5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including confidential counselling services. The course must also equip students to understand the potential impact of BIA practice on their own</p>	<p>MET</p>

emotional and mental wellbeing, and the importance of identifying ways to handle this impact.	
5.2 Ensure that students have access to a system of academic and pastoral support for their progression, development and welfare.	<u>MET</u>
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	<u>MET</u>
5.4 Make reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the specialist, capabilities in accordance with relevant legislation.	<u>MET</u>
5.5 Provide timely information to students about their curriculum, observation requirements, assessments, and implications for their continuing practice, including arrangements for annotation of the register and requirements for periodic refresher training.	<u>MET</u>
5.6 Ensure that students are able to draw links between the completion of their BIA course and ongoing refresher training, and the ongoing requirements of their professional registration such as continuing professional development.	<u>MET</u>
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	<u>MET</u>
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	<u>MET</u>
5.9 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational	<u>MET</u>

<p>wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.</p>	
<p><u>Key observations for standard 5.</u></p> <p>49. We considered evidence from discussions with students who had completed the module, the course team and employers, alongside the Module Handbook, online learning environment and university-level policies.</p> <p>50. We were shown a range of wellbeing, mental health and academic support services available to students through the University’s virtual hubs this included online and in person counselling opportunity. Support services were introduced during induction, and students were given access to the online learning environment before the course commences, enabling them to familiarise themselves with available support in advance. We noted that reflective practice is embedded within course assessments, supporting students to understand the potential emotional and mental impact of professional BIA practice and reinforcing the importance of recognising and managing this impact during their training, observations and once they were qualified. The course team described strong links with University support services including access to confidential counselling, and confirmed that students experiencing emotional or personal difficulty would be appropriately identified and signposted. This approach ensured that students were equipped with strategies to support their own wellbeing and had access to appropriate resources when required. (Standards 5.1, 5.2)</p> <p>51. In relation to academic progression, the course team explained that students are allowed two attempts to pass the assessment. Both components must be passed for successful completion of the module, and students who were unable to continue may defer to a subsequent academic year. Reasonable adjustments are supported, and while formal tutoring is not routinely provided due to the short duration of the module, ad hoc support was available where requested. The inspection team considered these arrangements to be proportionate to the size and length of the course.. (5.2, 5.4)</p> <p>52. The inspection team discussed fitness to practise (FtP) arrangements with the Subject Lead, who outlined the University’s FtP processes and how concerns would be managed should they arise. The process was explained from both student and observer perspectives, including staged meetings and escalation routes. For employer-sponsored students, concerns would normally be addressed initially through the employer, while independent students would be supported through their relevant professional or regulatory body if required. The</p>	

course team confirmed that they had established relationships to support timely and appropriate responses to any FtP concerns. (5.3)

53. We were satisfied that systems were in place to support students requiring reasonable adjustments. Support mechanisms were available through both the University and employers, and assessment requirements and deadlines could be modified where appropriate. Students were able to access online tools to identify and request reasonable adjustments, and additional learning needs could be declared at application stage. Adjustments to study arrangements were described as flexible and responsive. (5.4)

54. We heard that the University offers BIA refresher training, and while students were aware of ongoing professional development requirements, for BIA practice such as maintaining register annotation and completing refresher training, some were unable to recall exactly when this information was provided. The inspection team noted that this information is included within the Module Handbook and was accessible via the online learning environment, where students are provided with clear and timely information about post-qualification requirements, including annotation of the register, refresher training expectations and the implications for continuing practice as a BIA. (5.5, 5.6)

55. Processes for assessment feedback and reflection were also considered. Due to the short duration of the module, feedback during the course is limited; however, formative feedback was provided on the written essay submitted as part of the application process. This enables applicants to receive feedback on their submission prior to commencing the module, including confirmation of whether they have been offered a place and, where relevant, guidance on areas to address if a place is not offered. In addition, students were required to reflect on and incorporate feedback from their BIA observer within their summative assessment, supporting reflective learning. Reflection was further embedded within the course content itself. (5.7)

56. We were satisfied that assessment resit and appeals arrangements were in line with wider University MSc processes and applied consistently across Level 7 provision. Students were able to access the appeals process through the virtual learning environment. Where issues arose with observation, students were offered an alternative observation opportunity. (5.8)

57. We considered whistleblowing arrangements. Students confirmed awareness of the University's whistleblowing policy, which was also demonstrated during the inspection and was available through the online handbook. The handbook confirmed that the course lead offered one to one meetings for one-to-one discussions, with contact details clearly provided. Strong links with employers

further supported students, who may also be familiar with whistleblowing processes within their employing organisations. (5.9)	
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Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

59. 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 course provider within the agreed timescales.

60. 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	3.3	To inform and monitor how ethical considerations were made and appropriate consent was agreed within the observations, between BIA observer, student and service user or relevant parties.	27 July 2026	3.3

61. As conditions have been attached to the approval, University of Brighton provide evidence of meeting these conditions as outlined in the report and in the timescales agreed. Failure to do so may result in approval being withdrawn.

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.1	To review and further strengthen scoring mechanisms used at the application and interview stages, to ensure consistency, transparency and robustness in decision-making	1.1
2	2.2	To consider implementing an effective, module-specific approach for evaluating the contribution and impact of Expert by Experience (EBE) and BIA observer input.	2.2
3	3.1/3.2	To develop and provide clear guidance for relevant stakeholders, setting out expectations, roles and responsibilities in relation to observations.	3.1/3.2

Findings

63. The provider has satisfactorily addressed the conditions relating to Standard 3.3. The provider has amended the direct observation of practice documentation to include a clear and explicit section enquiring confirmation that informed consent has been obtained from the service user and/ or relevant parties prior to the observation. This document is monitored through the virtual learning record, providing an auditable process for oversight and quality assurance.

64. In addition, the provider has strengthened guidance for students and practice educators through supporting training materials. We reviewed a PowerPoint presentation which clearly outlines the requirement to obtain consent and consider ethical issues before undertaking direct observations of practice. We are satisfied this standard has now been met.