

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Manchester

Course approval: MA Social Work and Post Graduate Diploma Social Work (Exit Route).

Inspection dates : 20 - 22 June 2023

Report date:	11 August 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	9 October 2023
Date conditions met and approved:	19 February 2024

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Introduction

1. Social Work England completes inspections as part of our statutory requirement to approve and monitor courses. Inspections form part of our process to make sure that courses meet our [education and training standards](#) and ensure that students successfully completing these courses can meet our [professional standards](#).
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. One inspector is a social worker registered with us and the other is not a registered social worker (a 'lay' inspector). These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review information and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, placement provision, facilities, and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, training placement providers, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
3. The process we undertake is described in our legislation; the Social Worker Regulations 2018¹, and the Social Work England [\(Education and Training\) Rules 2019](#).
4. You can find further guidance on our course change, approval, and annual monitoring processes on our website.

What we do

5. When an education provider wants to make a change to a course, or request the approval of a new course, they are asked to consider how their course meets our education and training standards and our professional standards and provide evidence of this to us. We are also undertaking a cycle of re-approval of all currently approved social work courses in England following the introduction of the Education and Training Standards 2021.
6. The education quality assurance officer reviews all the documentary evidence provided and will contact the education provider if they have any questions about the information submitted. They also provide advice and guidance on our approval processes.
7. When we are satisfied that we have all the documentary evidence required to proceed with an inspection we assign one registrant and one lay inspector. We undertake a conflict-of-interest process when confirming our inspectors to ensure there is no bias or perception of bias in the approval process.
8. The inspectors complete an assessment of the evidence provided and advise the officer if they have any queries that may be able to be addressed in advance of the inspection.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111170090/contents>

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a 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. The University of Manchester and MA Social Work and Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip) Social Work (Exit Route) courses were 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	UMR1_CP250
Course provider	University of Manchester
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	MA Social Work and PG Dip Social Work (Exit Route)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	48
Date of inspection	20 – 22 June 2023
Inspection team	Sam Jameson Education Quality Assurance Officer Rebecca Khanna (Lay Inspector) Jane Reeves (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Manchester as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the MA Social Work and PG Dip Social Work (Exit Route) as ‘the course’ or the ‘programme’.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 20 to 22 June 2023 on the University of Manchester campus. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers, and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with eight students from both years of the MA course, including students' reps and alumni from the course. Discussions included their experiences of the application and admissions process, placements, skills days, social work theory to practice, people with lived experience of social work, teaching and learning, equality, diversity and inclusion, feedback, attendance, student and academic support and Social Work England Professional Standards.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, senior management team, staff involved in placement learning, staff involved in admissions, disability and student support services, library, and academic support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience (PWLE) of social work who have been involved in the course at the University of Manchester from the Focus On Involvement organisation, their Lead and the Lead for Manchester Carers. Discussions included what areas of the course they were involved with, how much input and feedback they had and were able to provide to the university, the course and what training they received in this role.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with five Practice Educators (PE) and representatives from placement partners including Gaddum placements, Signpost placements, Rochdale Council placements, Greater Manchester Social Work Academy (GMSWA) Project Manager, Salford Council placements, Bury Council placements, Manchester Council placements and Oldham Council placements.

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 mapping form regarding this standard contained links to the university entry, application, and selection processes. The inspection team were satisfied that these sources of information worked alongside the below pieces of documentary evidence to highlight a holistic assessment process for the university to ensure that its applicants have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

26. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence that the university provided prior to the inspection, which included the course Vetting Form Template, example of the Written Test, including Instructions, MA Social Work Admissions Process, example of the MA Social Work Interview Questions 2022-23, Interview Confirmation and Preparation Letter and ICT Skills Declaration. The inspectors were able to meet with staff involved in selection and admission to the course and were reassured that applicants were appropriately checked to ensure that they have a good command of English, have the capability to meet academic standards of the course and capability to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to achieve course outcomes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

27. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to Standard 1.1. We recommend that the written test in the admissions process is changed every year, and PWLE who are involved in the admissions process are given regular updates and reviews regarding values-based and unconscious bias training. Details of this recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section.

Standard 1.2

28. The inspectors were able to learn from their review of documentary evidence, including the course Vetting Form Template and information within the course mapping document, that the course has a three-tiered approach to assessing an applicant's prior experience. The inspection team were able to triangulate this within their meetings with staff involved in selection and admissions, and with the student group, identifying the use of the initial UCAS application form that the admissions staff review. This is shortlisted by the course team for interview and finally questioned at the interview stage.

29. The inspectors agreed that this provided applicants with a multi-layered approach to demonstrate their prior relevant experience, skills, and knowledge as part of the admissions process to the course, and that it is considered by the university and course team within this process. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

30. Following review of documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection, as identified in Standards 1.1 and 1.2, and from their discussions with PWLE, PEs and placement providers, the inspectors were assured that these key stakeholders were involved in the admissions processes for the course. Members of the PWLE group explained to the inspectors that they felt they were a key member of the process rather than there to 'tick a box'. They spoke of their feelings of equity throughout their involvement in the admissions process, that their views were respected and listened to as much as the rest of the interview panel.

31 Within the meeting with placement providers, social work practitioners echoed the feedback from the PWLE group, highlighting workload pressures as an issue regarding their attendance to the interview days at certain times, but reinforced they are always invited and there is a collaborative approach to this. An example of this provided to the inspectors was that of the interview questions that the practitioners, members from the PWLE group and course team decide together who wishes to ask what question, drawing on their expertise to bring to the process rather than being given set questions. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

32. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to the inspection included Health and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) declaration form and Progress to Year 2 Letter to Students. The inspectors reviewed links to the course website and spoke to staff involved in selection and admissions during the inspection week, that outlined the requirements and process of all offers being subject to both satisfactory health screening and self-declaration forms, followed by an enhanced DBS check, that is completed during the course welcome week. The inspectors were reassured that from their meeting with student support services,

applicants were supported by the university's Disability Advisory Support Services if there were any additional needs identified within the Occupational Health Questionnaire.

33. The inspectors considered whether the enhanced DBS check being done once the student was enrolled and in their first week of the course raised concerns about the possibility of a criminal conviction going undeclared, and whether this may place others at risk. Discussions with the course lead, operations manager, and officers of the education quality assurance team regarding this query took place throughout the inspection week. Reassurances were given by the course lead and team and further documentary evidence submitted during the inspection week regarding the timeframe for the DBS being submitted and returned for students outlined that no student would go onto placement without this and that all work within the modules with PWLE is supervised by a member of the course team until the first placement. The course team highlighted that international students must complete an overseas police check. Due to the nature of this being something done in a variety of countries the timeframe can be very variable, so this process is started earlier than compared to students applying from the UK.

34. The inspectors were reassured that the admissions processes assess a candidate's suitability in a range of ways, there is a second self-declaration in year two for students to complete and students are informed of the Professional Standards requirements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

35. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to Standard 1.4. The inspection team are recommending that the course provider considers undertaking the DBS process at the same time for UK and International students, prior to the course starting, so there is equity. This may also reduce the impact of any undisclosed issues for students who have already started the course. Details of this recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section.

Standard 1.5

36. The inspection team were assured that applicants are provided with a variety of methods to flag any health conditions or additional needs, from the initial UCAS application form, the interview process, linking in with the university's Disability Advisory Support Services where appropriate and at university open days. The inspectors were satisfied that this included that any disclosure made will not impact on the decisions taken about whether the applicant is offered a place on the course. The inspection team learnt from reviewing documentary evidence, including but not limited to Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, EDI for Interviewers, Fair Admissions to Higher Education and university EDI training, that the courses admissions process was in line with EDI principles and those involved have appropriate training to support this process.

37. The inspection team were provided with an example of a reasonable adjustment within the admissions process, this being the adjustment made to the order of the interview questions and the written test to support a student's individual needs. Staff involved in selection and admissions advised this was to support an applicant who required additional time for one of these aspects of the process. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

38. The inspection team met with a range of students during the inspection week who identified that they were given appropriate levels of guidance and information during their admissions process. They confirmed they felt in a position to make an informed decision regarding whether to take up an offer on the course. Two of the student group spoke of their experiences of advice and guidance regarding the social work bursary, identifying that during their application process they felt there was a lack of knowledgeable and concise information available.

39. The inspection team were able review documentary evidence which included guidance on the university's website, Admissions Policy, Social Work Open Day 2022-23, Offer Holder Meeting May 2022, Interview Confirmation Letter and Welcome Letter to Students. The inspectors confirmed that all appropriate and relevant information required for applicants was apparent in the sources of documentary evidence and in relation to meeting this standard. For example, the role and responsibilities of a student social worker, costs associated with the course, course structure and content, the role of Social Work England, professional regulation, registration, and fee. The inspectors noted links to research specialisms that applicants would have access to, because of the university's role within the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy (GMSWA). The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

40. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to Standard 1.6. We recommend that there is further training and development for staff involved in selection and admissions regarding the social work bursary so that applicants have access to quick, clear guidance and support in relation to the bursary. Details of this recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

41. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review documentary evidence that outlined students spend 200 days on placement. In year one this is 70 days on placement and 20 skills days, year two is 100 days on placement and 10 skills days. The inspectors were assured that students had contrasting placement experiences because of their discussions with students, staff involved in placement-based learning and placement providers. These

meetings reinforced that students tended to have a placement in a Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector (PVI) setting in their first year, with a statutory setting placement in their final placement, as highlighted in documentary evidence Placement Allocations- MA1 and MA2 2022-23.

42. The inspection team confirmed from speaking to staff involved in placement-based learning that the Higher Education Institution (HEI) Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) is used to assess whether a placement provider can provide a statutory or PVI setting, in which there are suitable learning opportunities, supervision support and practical arrangements for a student to develop and demonstrate the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for Social Work in England, British Association of Social Workers (BASW, 2018) and the Professional Standards. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within discussions with the students and placement provider meetings, confirming this is reviewed and checked at the learning agreement and interim placement meetings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

43. As identified in Standard 2.1 the HEI QAPL is used to assess whether a placement provider can provide settings that have learning opportunities, supervision support and practical arrangements that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills required to develop and meet the PCF and the Professional Standards. The inspectors learnt from the MA1 Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection, that this tool is used following the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) meeting to evidence how and where the student is progressing towards meeting the Professional Standards. Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning and development in the PARE, with the students PE, Academic Advisor (Personal Tutor), and On-Site Supervisor feeding into this, to continually review how the student is developing their knowledge and skills to meet the Professional Standards. Progression and development of the student is discussed at the interim review, and the PE group identified that supervision is used regularly to ensure that students have sufficient learning opportunities to assess whether any additional development requirements may be sought.

44. The inspection team received a wealth of positive feedback, from PEs, placement providers and students, regarding the matching process for students to placements. All identifying that this process measured a student's individual development needs, placement allocations were carefully considered, and placement providers highlighted they received detailed information regarding the student in a timely manner, that ensured they can provide appropriate learning opportunities to enable students to develop and meet the Professional Standards. The student group provided narrative evidence of their experience of their placement learning outcomes being clear and the matching process was robust. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

45. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the MA1 and MA2 PARE, New Induction Workshop GMSWA 2022 and Linking Student Practice to Social Work England Professional Standards and PCF February 2023. The inspectors were able to learn from this evidence review that all students have a PLA meeting held prior to the start of the placement, with the student, their Academic Advisor chairing, PE, and On-Site Supervisor in attendance. During the meeting with the PE group the inspection team were able to triangulate documentary evidence regarding the PLA meeting. The PE group identified that their experience of this meeting was a protective feature for the student, ensuring that they had an appropriate induction phase that could highlight any additional requirements at an early stage, provide the student with an outline of their learning outcomes, expected workload, induction plan outlining training required, policies to review, supervision arrangements, dress code, required resources whilst on placement and IT support.

46. The inspection team heard from the student group of some instances where they had to wait until their on-site supervisor returned from annual leave before they could fully start their induction and waiting to get IT access, however they did have time to review relevant policies and procedures. The student group spoke of how supportive the course team involved in placement-based learning were during this time, ensuring that, if required, they had shadowing opportunities to support their development and learning opportunities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

47. As identified in Standard 2.2 and 2.3, the PLA meeting is a source of ensuring that a student has clear learning opportunities and a realistic workload, providing a platform to safeguard student's whilst they are on placement and their responsibilities are appropriate to their stage of skills and experience. The inspectors were able to review the Practice Learning Handbook which outlined the role of the Academic Mentor in ensuring that students do not undertake practice that is not appropriate for them at their stage of learning, such as leading a safeguarding investigation. The Handbook identifies areas that a student could co-work, such as in a safeguarding investigation, with a qualified social work practitioner to support their learning and development.

48. Students informed the inspection team of their experiences of placements being generally PVI in the first year and statutory in the second, with a planned and supported growth in their workload and responsibility between these contrasting placements. The inspectors were reassured by the detail within documentary evidence, PARE and Assessed Readiness for Practice module, from speaking to staff involved in placement-based learning that students are matched to appropriate placements, their individual learning needs are

fully incorporated into this decision and both the safety of the student and PWLE of social work was thread throughout this process.

49. The inspectors were able to meet with PEs during the inspection week, who identified that their supervisions and PE report from the first placement helps to support the decision for a student's second placement, so that workload and expectation is adjusted accordingly and matched to the individual students' level of development needs in the final year. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

50. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence that illustrated how students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice and ensure that they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting. The inspectors were able to identify that students must work through and pass the Assessed Readiness for Direct Practice (ARDP) module before being able to start their first placement. As identified in Standard 1.4, students must complete a self-declaration form and complete a DBS check before their first placement, documentary evidence outlined that the GMSWA and placement providers are involved in reviewing any concerns flagged during this process to determine whether anything that is flagged could be a barrier to obtaining a placement. The inspection team were able to triangulate this evidence within the meeting with placement providers and staff involved in placement-based learning, that highlighted that this process includes checking a student's health needs or reasonable adjustments.

51. The inspectors were satisfied that there was a robust and multifaceted approach within the ARDP module to assess a student's readiness for practice in a placement setting. The ARDP Handbook September 2022-2023 outlined this is achieved through the taught sessions, a formative simulated practice assessment with PWLE on communication and engagement skills. The inspectors heard from the PWLE group of their involvement in this and the immediate feedback they give to students following this assessment. A summative Observed Simulated Assessment (OSA), where students are observed and assessed by a registered social worker. Documentary evidence outlined that if a student does not pass, which they must to progress through the module and onto placement, then they have one more opportunity to pass. If they do not, students have an exit route either to PG Certificate or a transcript of credits. Inspectors were able to learn that the ARDP module includes a written exercise, that includes a reflective piece and focus on the Professional Standards, the Academic Advisor checks their attendance and engagement on the course, completes an interview that students must pass, and seeks their reflection and feedback on their OSA. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

52. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence, MA1 PARE, that outlined PE Social Work England registration numbers are recorded, then checked against the online SWE register by the Academic Advisor and records their Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS, BASW, 2019) training level against records held by GMSWA. This was confirmed during the inspectors meeting with PEs, who spoke of the Practice Educator Training Programme they can access. The inspection team learnt from documentary evidence that members of the course team worked with members of the GMSWA to develop and then deliver face to face training workshops and online sessions for PEs through this training programme.

53. Placement providers and PEs highlighted to the inspectors that the HEI QAPL is used to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the role and responsibilities of the PEs, and they have the time and resources to effectively carry out the role. The course mapping document evidenced that staff involved in placement-based learning are members of the GMSWA Practice Learning Steering Group, that works to ensure that placement providers maintain PE professional currency and have appropriate numbers of skilled and experienced PEs.

54. Documentary evidence reviewed in support of this standard included Stage 1 and 2 Assessment Pack PEPs, Refresher Workbook and Practice Education Conference Flyer. The inspection team learnt that new PEs are assigned a mentor to support them, PEs can access master classes, the annual GMSWA PE Conference, and PE refresher training through GMSWA, with the course team involved in its development and delivery, that also aids PE Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This includes PEs who have not had a student for two years or more. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

55. The inspectors were able to review the Placement Concerns Guidance, that has a process for students and PEs to follow regarding a concern being raised. Inspectors were reassured that this is covered in the Introduction to Placement Skills Day, which reinforces to students that they will be supported by their Academic Advisor throughout this process and instil that they will not be penalised for raising a concern.

56. During their meeting with the PE group, the inspectors were informed that a student's induction would always cover relevant policies and procedures regarding a student challenging unsafe behaviours, cultures, and organisational wrongdoing, with check ins at supervision to ensure they knew how to report any concerns. Placement providers reinforced that this is always covered within the PLA meeting, interim review and end-point review. Inspectors were able to triangulate this within their meeting with the student group, who identified they felt able and reassured to make their concerns known and who to speak to. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

57. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence, including the Curriculum Vitae (CV) for Head of Social Work and Programme Director, Directorate Lead, Terms of Reference (ToR) of Programme Committee and Social Work Assessment Strategy, submitted in support of this standard prior to the inspection. The inspectors considered whether the course was supported by a clear management and governance plan that sets out clear roles and responsibilities for both individuals and groups.

58. The presentation from the Head of Social Work during the inspection gave clarity that the course forms part of the postgraduate taught provision in the Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, which sits within the School of Health Sciences. The inspectors were able to meet with the Senior Management Team during the inspection and speak to the Programme Director throughout the week, which provided additional insight into the structure and process within the course and wider Division.

59. The inspectors received additional documentary evidence, Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP), redacted minutes from Divisional Leadership Team Meetings and Programme Committee meetings. These evidenced the frameworks in place to ensure that lines of accountability and responsibility are clear and that these support the delivery, resourcing, and quality management of the course. The inspectors were able to learn that student representatives and members of PWLE group attend the Programme Committee to provide their insight and feedback into the course, as well as the annual review process that the SEAP feeds into the School of Health Sciences collated annual action plan for all postgraduate taught programmes. The inspectors were assured that the course is led by those with direct experience of social work, registered social workers with appropriate additional educational qualifications and experience. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

60. The inspectors reviewed the Practice Handbook prior to the inspection, which stipulates the roles and responsibilities of placement providers and their commitment to provide education and training opportunities that meet the Professional Standards and PCF. The inspection team were able to meet with staff involved with placement-based learning, PEs, and placement providers during the inspection. The inspectors were able to triangulate information within documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection, including the Collaboration Agreement Between MASW Placements and HEI QAPL. The inspectors were assured that this document contained all required and appropriate information, links to appropriate university guidance regarding the role and responsibility of the placement provider, requirements of the Professional Standards and PCF domains, PE arrangements, PWLE, Practice Learning Handbook, induction and supervision for students, managing

placement concerns and contingency for placement breakdown, health, safety and wellbeing, equality and diversity, payment and obligations of the university.

61. Within the meeting with placement providers, the GMSWA Project Manager highlighted the role in which the university plays within the Academy, with other HEI and local authorities, identifying the Practice Learning Working Group that focuses on the on-going work of ensuring that there are sufficient quality placements for students and that these placements have the ability to provide suitable learning opportunities in regard to the Professional Standards, and meet the Education and Training Standards. Within the meeting with PE's, they gave an example of how supportive the process was in place for a student whose placement was at risk of breaking down due to a personal issue. The PEs highlighted how supportive the university placement team were, enabled by the clear process and their timely response in supporting the student, constructing a collaborative plan to enable the student to take some time away from the placement and return when they were able to continue the course. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

62. From their meeting with student support services the inspectors learnt that students could access all university support services and any guidance or additional support that they may require whilst on placement. During the meeting with placement providers and PEs it was highlighted that the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) meeting outlines any additional requirements that the student may require whilst on placement, including any needs associated with a disability, caring commitments, or reasonable adjustments. As referenced in Standard 3.2, the Collaboration Agreement Between MASW Placements identifies relevant policies and procedures regarding this standard, including lone working, health, wellbeing and safety, whistleblowing, and confidentiality. The inspection team were able to hear from students, PEs, and placement providers, that all of these are covered within the PLA meeting and student's induction, including guidance for students on how to manage aggressive or challenging behaviour whilst on placement, and that students have an identified emergency contact in event of any concerns arising regarding a student's safety and wellbeing.

63. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included the Practice Learning Handbook 20022-2023, with clear links and guidance for students to mental health, wellbeing, physical health and support, what to do and help in a crisis or emergency, counselling and mental health services, and a free 24/7 counselling service for students. Within their meeting with students, the inspectors learnt of Wellbeing Workshops that the MA student cohorts could attend prior to their placements, as well as a Placement Journey Workshop that focuses on self-care, sharing resources and teaching from an external wellbeing trainer and coach. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

64. Documentary evidence, ToR for Programme Committee, Practice Learning Steering Group ToR, and Concerns Meeting Report, submitted prior to the inspection highlighted that there are employer representatives involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the course. The inspection team were able to triangulate this within meetings with the course team and placement providers, that evidenced that the Chair of the GMSWA Placement Learning Workstream sits as a member of the MA Concerns Review Panel and the Project Manager of the GMSWA is the employer representative on the MA Programme Committee. The inspection team learnt that one of the roles of the MA Programme Committee is to ensure that teaching, learning, and assessment for the course is planned and implemented, with monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The Committee meets three times per academic year and is present for all minor and major changes to the course, at unit and programme level, which the Committee must review and approve. The inspection team heard from their meeting with placement providers that employer representatives are also involved in the admissions process, teaching, skills days, sitting on interview panels and spoke of their equity throughout.

65. From documentary evidence and discussions with the Project Manager of the GMSWA the inspection team were assured that there is equitable distribution of statutory practice placements. These are managed at the GMSWA Governance Board and Practice Learning Workstream that oversees the allocation of placements and Pes, with a collaborative approach between the GMSWA and its representation from the university, with the course's Head of Social Work on the GMSWA Governance Board and members of the course team on the Practice Learning Workstream of the GMSWA. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

66. The inspection team reviewed detailed information within the mapping guidance and documentary evidence that the course incorporates QAPL's from a range of sources, including PEs and students. These assist in gathering data from both parties regarding quality of placement provision, feedback of their experiences, whether learning opportunities are appropriate, and if they provide students with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate meeting the Professional Standards and PCF domains. In the PWLE meeting, one member explained that a subject within the course had been triggering for them and from the feedback they gave to the course team there were changes made. They spoke of how supportive and responsive the course team were and that there is now a more robust procedure in place to support the PWLE group.

67. As a result of documentary evidence and meetings with students, PWLE and placement providers the inspection team were able to triangulate that the MA Programme Committee has representatives from students, PWLE and placement providers, including the GMSWA. As identified in Standard 3.4 this Committee meets three times per academic year to monitor and review any proposed changes to the course. Students' evaluation is sought

through several methods, within the PARE document that allows their evaluation of the placement and their PE to be collected by the course team, meetings with student representatives, Head of Social Work and Student Experience Tutor, as well as mid and end-point course unit surveys. The inspectors were provided with an updated MA Social Work Assessment Strategy prior to the inspection which further evidenced evaluation and improvement from key stakeholders involved from the MA Programme Committee.

68. The inspection team were provided with additional evidence that highlighted that this data feeds into the information gathered from the QAPL's and reviewed by representatives from PWLE, students and placement providers within the GMSWA Practice Learning Steering Group, working alongside an annual Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) that assists in the monitoring, evaluation, and development of the course. This is presented to the wider Faculty each year and discussed within the MA Programme Committee meetings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

69. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included The School of Health Sciences Strategic Plan (from 2023), Memorandum of Understanding GMSWA and Target Numbers for MA Social Work course, which indicted the forecast numbers for the ensuing five years for both home and international students. The inspectors were able to triangulate this information within their meetings with senior management team, course team, staff involved in placement-based learning and placement providers. The inspection team heard examples of target student figures that are identified and agreed annually within the Faculty, School, and Division for the course and staffing resources, and form part of the workforce planning within the GMSWA with regards to social work practice demands and regional placement capacity. The inspection team heard from several key stakeholders, identified above, of the productive professional relationship between the course staff involved in placement-based learning, GMSWA and placement providers, that enables quality placement experiences to be identified, including new providers that have clear learning opportunities for students to learn and develop to meet the Professional Standards and PCF. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

70. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included detailed information in the mapping document of the Head of Social Work's role, responsibilities, and CV, which confirmed their registration with Social Work England, appropriate qualifications, and experience. The inspectors were able to check and verify this information. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

71. The university was able to demonstrate, through documentary evidence reviewed by the inspection team and within meetings, that the course team are appropriately resourced and supported by the senior management team and wider university support services.

Documentary evidence of the Course Team CVs, reviewed prior to the inspection confirmed that all the course team are registered social workers. Five have Advance Higher Education Fellowships, one at Principal level, one at Senior level and three at Fellowship, with the course teams annual Performance and Development Review providing further development opportunities.

72. The CVs provided evidence of professional and academic experience and specialist subject knowledge in social work, with the inspectors able to triangulate this within meetings with the course team. The inspectors were provided with examples of how the PWLE group and social work practitioners are part of the development and delivery of the curriculum to ensure current social work practice and learning from those who have direct experience of social work services is incorporated into the delivery of the course. The inspectors were assured that the course team represent an adequate number of staff to deliver an effective course, and discussions held with external stakeholders and students confirmed this. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

73. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included Equality and Diversity Policy 2019, Progression and Attainment Analysis 2018-2021 and Progression Responses from the MA course team, this last submitted as additional evidence during the inspection week. The inspectors learnt from speaking to the course team and senior management team that data on student performance and development is provided to the Head of Social Work and all the course team unit leads, providing an overview of each student's academic performance and progression on a unit-by-unit basis, their first and second year and overview of trends from year to year. This enables any concerns or trends identified to be discussed at course team meetings and away days, as highlighted in documentary evidence minutes from Team Meetings, Programme Committee meeting and the Annual Away Day.

74. The senior management team identified to the inspectors that a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) dashboard was introduced in January 2022. The inspectors were able to learn from the Progressions Responses that the course team and Head of Social Work were in receipt of student data, including EDI, that identified attainment disparities within the data and students with protected characteristics. The course team and lead agreed to offer progression meetings with all students and their Academic Advisors to seek to provide a supportive and collective approach focusing on progression, linking in with appropriate student support services, submitting formative assessments, and further monitoring within the course team. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

75. The inspectors met with the senior management team during the inspection, who identified that the course team works in line with a divisional workload planning model which includes 20% of work time to be directed upon scholarly activity and maintaining professional currency, with a robust staff development fund and inter-professional mentoring available to the course team. As identified earlier in this report all members of the course team are registered social workers, they record their CPD annually as part of their registration, which must be evidenced through a self-declaration, and either hold Advance Higher Education Fellowships or have further development opportunities within their annual Performance and Development Review.

76. Through meeting with the course team the inspectors were able to triangulate documentary evidence and they were provided with a wide range of examples of how they maintain and develop current social work practice, including involvement and managing in practice related forums as part of the GMSWA, social work related research studies and awards, Safeguarding Lead at a Primary School, and an Approved Mental Health Practitioner duty rota. The course team spoke of accessing the wider university Staff Development resource through its Learning Development Unit, identifying the Higher Education Anti-Racist Training (HEART) that was being undertaken by some members and then would be rolled out to the wider course team, as one example. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

77. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review the Professional Standards MASW map 2022, MA Social Work 2022-2023 Handbook and Programme Learning Outcomes, which showed clear links and consideration of design and assessment against the Professional Standards, The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmarking Statement for Social Work and PCF. The inspection team agreed that there was clear documentary evidence of how the course content had been designed and structured to prepare students for professional practice as social workers.

78. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Social Work England Professional Standards Map to MASW Units 2022, the inspection team were able to identify the links within this document that details where the knowledge and skills required to meet the Professional Standards are both taught and assessed across the programme. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within the meeting with the course team, confirming that students need to pass all units to be able to graduate from the course. As referenced in Standard 2.5, students must pass the ARDP module to progress onto placement, demonstrating the required knowledge and skills that are mapped to the above standards, and evidencing that they can meet these through the course assessments. The

inspection team learnt from documentary and mapping evidence that students must demonstrate that they have met the Professional Standards in their online portfolio and this forms part of the assessment of their placement. The inspection team were able to speak to a range of students who spoke of their awareness of the Professional Standards, PCF, expectations in a professional qualification and CPD, Social Work England requirements and their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). The student group gave an example of a representative from Social Work England coming into the university to talk to them about applying for registration and future professional practice and requirements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

79. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence prior to the inspection which included ToR for Programme Committee, identifying that this is the university's formal mechanism for reviewing the course, and the Committee meets three times a year. As evidenced in Standards 1.3 and 3.5 the Committee has representatives from the PWLE group, students, the GMSWA and registered social workers from the local area, who are involved in the design and ongoing review of the curriculum.

80. The inspectors were provided with Programme Committee Meeting minutes and triangulated these within their meetings with PWLE, employer partners and students. The inspectors were provided with examples from the PWLE meeting, members spoke of attending the MA Programme Committee meetings, members are on the fitness to practice and admission panels, co-developing the ARDP module by their role in the simulation exercise and writing the scenarios, giving live feedback to students, and marking students' profiles following completion of their placements. The group were all clear that they do not feel their involvement is tokenistic. They spoke to the inspection team of feeling valued and that they do give honest feedback and suggestions, which can present the need for change and potential challenges to the course team but that this is welcomed. One example given to the inspection team was that of students not introducing themselves adequately, so this area of learning and development was fed back to the course team and addressed within the module content.

81. The inspectors were provided with documentary evidence, MA2 Skills Days Timetable 2022-2023, from which they learnt that there are currently 66 social work practitioners and 14 PLWE of social work involved in the course skills days. From meeting with students, PWLE and employer partners the inspection team were able to learn of their role in design and review of skills days and modules, one example of this was the move in the ADRP module assessment changing to an observed simulated assessment. The inspectors were provided with narrative evidence and from the meeting with the employer partners, one attendee who worked in a PVI organisation spoke of their role in working directly with the course team regarding integrating their knowledge and specialism into the curriculum following feedback they had given. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

82. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence, Equality and Diversity Policy 2019, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Dignity at Work and Study Policy, that demonstrated the course had been designed in accordance with appropriate EDI Principles, Human Rights, and legislative frameworks. The inspectors were satisfied from reviewing the course modules, documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection and their discussions with the course team that these principles were embedded throughout the course. The inspectors were provided with examples of the Divisional work that went into decolonising the curriculum across the university and within the Social Political and Organisational Contexts of Social Work module, focusing on issues related to inclusion, marginalisation, and issues of power. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within the meeting with students who spoke of this learning and taking it into their placements and practice learning.

83. The inspection team met with student support services, Disability, Advisory and Support Service, and given an overview of the robust support students can access for upholding their physical and mental health and any additional resources and support that may be required both on the campus and in placement. Examples triangulated from documentary evidence included adjustment to teaching sessions timing to support those students with caring responsibilities, accessible learning materials so that students can rewatch, pause lectures and listen through podcasts to assist their learning style and pace, and condensing teaching times to reduce costs incurred with travel and caring responsibilities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

84. Through their meetings with the course team, placement providers, students, PEs, and a review of the documentary evidence, PGT Teaching Learning Committee ToR and a range of module handbooks, the inspectors were provided with insight into how the course is continually updated due to developments in research, legislation, government policy and social work practice. Documentary evidence highlighted that this is achieved through monthly course team meetings to focus on curriculum development, and an annual quality away day with the Head of Social Work, Unit Leads and the course team reviews the programme and any updates and developments for the next year. The inspection team met with the university Academic Support Services who provided an overview of the wealth of educational resources and tools that supports the course team to maintain contemporary material within their teaching and access to any developments in research, policy, and social work practice.

85. As identified in Standard 3.4, frontline social work practitioners are involved and have roles within the teaching of the curriculum and skills days. The inspection team were assured from their meetings with key stakeholders that this supports students'

development and learning regarding current social work practice, pressures, and service developments. The inspection team were able to meet with the course team and review CVs which identified their ability to draw upon and incorporate their own research, one example being 'Understanding the Social Care Assessment Journey of Older LGBTQ+ People' in The Life-course and Social Relationships module, and knowledge gained from course staff involved in The National Institute for Health and Care Research, Joint Universities Council Social Work Education Learning and Teaching Committee (JUCSWEC) and JUCSWEC Research Sub-Committee. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

86. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review the module handbooks, learning outcomes, and MA1 PARE Holistic Assessment, which highlighted where and how social work theory and practice is integrated into the course. Documentary evidence was triangulated within meetings with the course team, students, and PEs, which enabled the inspectors to hear directly how social work theoretical frameworks are introduced to students, developed throughout other modules before consolidating in skills days, practice based and academic learning.

87. The inspectors were told in the PE meeting that students from the course have a solid understanding of theory, which is focused upon during placement through reflection within supervision. They encourage the students to draw upon and link theory to practice, using critical reflection skills and discussions with their PE to explore and develop their knowledge base. The inspection team received narrative evidence from the student group, expressing that the course team's enthusiasm, professional knowledge, and curiosity inspired them to continue their development, highlighting that the course teams own research topics carried into the teaching sessions brought theory to life and enabled them to link theory to practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

88. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included Interdisciplinary Working Cross Referencing to Course Unit Intended Learning Outcomes, MA2 Skills Days Timetable 2022-2023, and Faculty Simulation Group Interprofessional Learning via Virtual Reality Simulation. These highlighted social work students working alongside health care students in piloting case scenarios, with the learning objectives focusing on supporting the development of clinical communication skills regarding healthcare and social work programmes.

89. The inspection team were able to triangulate the information they reviewed prior to the inspection regarding how the course ensures that students can work with and learn from other professions to support multidisciplinary working, from their meetings with the course team, students, and PEs. The student group spoke of their attendance and involvement in

the annual Perinatal Mental Health Conference with Midwifery and Mental Health Nurse programmes, working together on case scenarios that are then reviewed and discussed with a specialist panel including midwives, mental health nurses and child protection social workers. The inspection team learnt that students attend and help to facilitate an interdisciplinary court skill training day, following completion of the safeguarding module, at a Moot court with a judge, practising barristers, and final year law students, providing the students experience of working and learning from these other professions to develop their skills and knowledge.

90. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence within the mapping form and redacted emails that identified the multidisciplinary learning opportunities that students have during placements. This highlighted that the PLA meeting is utilised to set these in place, and the work that the staff involved with placement-based learning do to ensure that if opportunities are not secured then alternative shadowing and learning is organised for the student. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

91. The inspection team were able to review the MA Social Work Handbook and the Social Work Assessment Strategy prior to the inspection. Within this documentary evidence the numbers of hours a student spends in structured academic learning was broken down so that it highlighted how many teaching hours were allocated for each module, detailing the independent and direct contact time for study, and how this assigned time was linked to learning outcomes and the monitoring of student's progression through the course. The inspection team learnt from their meeting with students that the electronic attendance monitoring system had issues and different methods were used to record their attendance, however the inspection team were assured that there is a robust focus to promote and monitor attendance by the course team and wider university services going forward and were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

92. The inspectors were provided with the new version of the MA Social Work Assessment Strategy, following it being passed by the Programme Committee and its key stakeholders as identified in Standard 3.5, prior to the inspection. This was alongside the MA Social Work Handbook and the Social Work England Professional Standards Map to MASW Units 2022 that enabled the inspectors to identify that the course assessment strategy and design was robust, fair, reliable, and valid, with clarity regarding how the modules and learning outcomes were linked to the Professional Standards and PCF. The inspectors were able to triangulate this documentary evidence within their meetings with the course team, PEs, students, and placement providers. This provided further insight into the student's readiness for practice resulting from their knowledge and skills developing through their

progression of the course, its assessments and developing their ability to meet the professional standards.

93. The inspectors noted the External Examiner reports highlighted the range of assessments provided within the course and the benefits of this approach, supporting the varied ways in which individual students learn and develop, as one example. Within the meeting with employer partners the inspection team were given narrative evidence in support of this standard. The attendees collectively spoke of their experiences of students from the course, expressing that students have been given the appropriate preparation to understand what is expected of them on placement, have a grounding of the demands of social work practice as a student and going into their longer-term career. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

94. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to Standard 4.8. We recommend that there is clarity provided regarding a point within the course Assessment Strategy in which it states that the following is done, 'devise inclusive assessment and review assessment outcomes in relation to attainment profiles.' Details of this recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section.

Standard 4.9

95. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included The Social Work Assessment Strategy, Social Work England Professional Standards Map to MASW Units 2022, The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes, and the MA Social Work Handbook 2022-23. The inspection team were satisfied that the learning outcomes are all mapped against the Professional Standards, QAA Subject Benchmarking Statements for Social Work, the PCF, and Level 7 Higher Education Qualifications Framework, and are appropriately mapped to reflect a student's development and progression through the course. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

96. The inspection team were able to learn from the course mapping information and documentary evidence that students are provided with a range of feedback methods, including formative and summative, assessment workshops, supervision for dissertation, one to one meetings with their Academic Advisor, weekly supervision sessions, live feedback from PWLE involved in ARDP module and from PEs within placement settings. The inspectors were reassured that this is provided in line with the university's Policy on Feedback to Students and detail within the Social Work Assessment Strategy, to ensure that feedback is timely and meaningful, that comes from a collaborative range of sources to support the student's assessment, progression and that encourages students to reflect on their performance. Within the meeting with students there were comments from one of the

attendees that they had spoken to other students who felt their feedback was not always clear and felt they needed further guidance from the marker. During the inspection students spoke of their feedback being very descriptive and informative.

97. The inspectors were able to review an External Examiner report prior to the inspection that raised some developmental suggestions regarding variation in feedback and potential missed opportunities for developmental feedback in their report from 2022. The inspectors learnt from the university response that they have sought to address these within actions taken by the course team, these being taking a standardised approach to the volume and the structure of feedback provided to uphold consistency, therefore the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

98. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review documentary evidence, Staff CVs, provided by the university that detailed staff qualifications, professional registration, and experience. As a result of their review of the university's New Academics Programme, the inspectors learnt that staff have a structured introduction and mentorship programme during their three-year probation to support their development that included assessment and marking, with continuing professional development through the university Institute of Teaching and Learning to uphold their skills and consistency.

99. From their review of the External Examiners CVs and Programme Report the inspectors were assured that the External Examiner's for the course are appropriately qualified, experienced and on the Social Work England register. The inspection team noted that the university has Guidance on External Examiner Procedures that sets out the criteria for nomination into this role, focusing upon seniority, experience, and knowledge of assessment frameworks in higher education, with nominations being considered and recommended by the Division Post Graduate Teaching and Learning Committee and approval by the Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health. As identified within Standard 4.10, the inspection team received documentary evidence, External Examiner Report and Programme Report Response, highlighting that the course team reviews and feeds back to its External Examiners following their recommendations and suggestions. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

100. The inspection team was able to review documentary evidence about how the university and course team manage students' progression through the course that is fair and robust, highlighting the process set out in the Divisions Marking and Moderating Guidelines for summative assessments marking for internal, and then external moderation by the External Examiners. The inspectors learnt of The Divisional Examination Board meeting three times a year and an annual Progression Board, with progression requirements

outlined in the MA Social Work Handbook, including two observations of direct practice in placement at year one and three in year two. Through their meetings with the course team, students, PWLE, placement providers and PEs, the inspection team were able to confirm that there is a range and wealth of people and professionals involved in assessment processes, therefore the inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

101. From their review of documentary evidence, including the Welcome Week Timetable, Introduction to Social Work Handbook, Foundations of Research Handbook, and Dissertation Handbook, the inspectors learnt of the developmental approach to equipping students, from their first week through to the final placement and dissertation, to grow an evidence informed approach to social work practice.

102. The inspection team were assured that there is a robust progressive approach to the development of an evidenced informed approach within the course teaching and curriculum, that is complimented by a research active staff group who incorporate their own national and international research areas into the programme, as identified within documentary evidence, and the Staff CVs.

103. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within their meeting with the student group. They identified that the course teams research supports their learning and development, they spoke of finding it interesting and engaging, due to the course team knowing the research topic in such depth. The inspection team were satisfied that the course is designed to enable students to learn, develop their skills and ability to gather, use, analyse and evaluate evidence that informs their decision making and enable effective practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

104. During the inspection, the inspectors met with university support services from the Disability Advisory Support Services, Counselling and Mental Health Service, Occupational Health Services, Student and Wellbeing Service, and Careers Advisor. This enabled the inspectors to triangulate documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard, that highlighted the range of student support services on offer to students both on campus and on placement, and that is available from application, to offer and from being accepted onto the course.

105. The inspection team was provided with narrative evidence from these services which provided insight into the Student Support website, Counselling and Wellbeing service and dedicated student mental health and crisis support through Help in a Crisis service, the Careers advice service and annual Careers Fair, and the Occupational Health services at the

university. There is detailed information within the Programme Handbook for students to access as required, wellbeing workshops during the course and an annual wellbeing session to encourage and provide resources regarding self-care, including how and where to access support services.

106. The inspection team noted the role of the Postgraduate Student Experience Lead for the Division of Nursing, Midwifery, and Social Work, who is a member of the course team, and they link in with social work students and representatives. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

107. Documentary evidence, Policy on Advising Taught Students and Academic Advisor Toolkit, submitted ahead of the inspection outlined the Academic Advisor role. They have an academic and pastoral role in supporting students throughout the course, starting from welcome week and students have the same advisor throughout the course. The inspection team learnt the range of areas the Academic Advisor supports students, including one to one and group meetings, drop-in sessions, supporting on placement and chairing PLA meeting, interim and end-point reviews, including if a student needs time away from the course and Concerns Meetings.

108. The inspection team were provided with some examples from the student group that the support they had received from their allocated Academic Advisor was not supportive, expressing that they found their Academic Advisor difficult to contact, slow in response and limited guidance when they did communicate. That resulted in the student seeking, and finding, useful support and guidance from the staff involved in placement learning. The inspection team noted that the experience shared with them from the PE group, was that of the Academic Advisor and their student having a good relationship; the Academic Advisor was in regular contact, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic in their support of the student. One PE gave the example of supporting a student, with the Academic Advisor, to take time away from their placement due to a family bereavement but were able to return to the course and continue their professional development, following supported time away.

109. Both narrative and documentary evidence provided the inspection team with an overview of students being able to access support whilst on campus, during placements and access to a wealth of specialist support services, as identified in Standard 5.1, regarding a variety of areas, including but not limited to students with financial difficulties, caring responsibilities, additional support needs and mature students. The inspection team heard from their meeting with student support services of the university's My Learning Essentials and Academic Success Programme, that offers workshops and online materials to support with student academic development throughout stages of their learning and advancement through the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

110. The university and course team were able to demonstrate that there was a robust process in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of a student's conduct, character and health through its documentary evidence submission and meetings with the inspection team. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included the MA Social Work 2022-23 Handbook, Academic Malpractice Procedure, Procedure for Summary Discipline Panels, Process of Escalation for Concerns, Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health Fitness to Practice Policy and its Guidance for Students. The inspectors were satisfied there was a range of processes in place ensuring ongoing suitability of students post pre-entry stage.

111. The inspectors learnt that students must repeat self-declarations they complete in their admissions process, including DBS and health forms in the second year of the course, with a clear process of escalation via their Academic Adviser and Head of Social Work, including a referral to student support services if appropriate. However, if concerns are identified during a placement, then direction in Placement Concerns is highlighted and guidelines for PEs, with tiered procedures to concerns regarding fitness to practice, academic misconduct, and professional suitability. The inspection team were able to triangulate and confirm that students were aware of these procedures during their meeting with them. Within the meeting with PEs, one attendee spoke of their experience of a fitness to practice issue, and the steps taken following this. This included a concerns meeting, actions and a plan was put in place to support the student. They expressed this was a collaborative and transparent process throughout. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

112. The inspectors were able to meet with members of staff from the university Disability Advisory Support Service (DASS) during the inspection, that enabled the inspection team to triangulate documentary evidence regarding DASS Advisors, University Support Plans, and the coordinated support that students can access regarding any health conditions or additional support requirements. The support staff identified that they link in with the course teams, to ensure that the close work they have done with students to identify any additional requirements or support needs are shared to enable the student to progress through the course, including placement learning and this was part of the PLA meetings.

113. The inspection team were provided with a variety of examples of these support processes in practice. One attendee from the staff involved in practice-based learning identified a support plan that was agreed upon with the student, DASS, Academic Advisor and placement setting, that outlined the additional adjustments, health, and safety plans that a student's mobility needs required a change in their working hours and evacuation planning in the event of an emergency. The inspection team heard how these adjustments enabled the student to meet the course requirements and graduate from the course,

meeting the professional standards and gaining a social work post upon their completion of the course.

114. As identified in Standards 1.4 and 5.3, students complete an Occupational Health Questionnaire as part of their admissions process and in their second year. The inspection team met with members of staff from the Occupational Health Service who explained that this offers students a full health assessment, provides support to the student and links into the course team for any additional support needs identified from this process. The inspection team noted the university Policy on Interruptions, which sets out the process for if a student requires time away from the course and their study, the monitoring and support during this time and return when appropriate, and information for students is included in the MA Social Work Handbook 2022-23. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

115. The inspection team were assured from their review of documentary evidence, the MA Social Work Handbook 2022-2023 and Module Handbooks, and from meetings with the course team and the student group, that students are provided with and then reminded in a structural manner of the curriculum and assessment processes for the course, the placement requirements and expectations, and the nature of social work as a regulated profession, and what this means for them as students and going forward into their professional career.

116. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence, GMSWA Career Fair Programme 2023, that highlighted the opportunity for students to learn further about the requirements for CPD, professional registration requirements and details regarding their ASYE. Students confirmed that they were aware of these requirements when the inspection team met with them, with further guidance available on the university's digital learning platform, Blackboard, regarding ASYE, university careers service, job applications and CV writing.

117. The inspectors were able to triangulate this information within the meeting with a member of the university Careers Service. They highlighted the support they provide to social work students, focusing on students' professional skills and requirements for personal statements and applications, as well as supporting international students with an International Student Support Lead and guidance with careers in the UK, support with CVs and visas. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

118. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review the MA Social Work Handbook 2022-2023 and the ARDP Handbook, that outlined students are required to attend all teaching days, including skills days, with a minimum attendance requirement of

80%. The inspection team learnt that Academic Advisors are required to monitor student attendance, signing off a student meeting this minimum requirement as part of the ARDP module. If a student misses two teaching sessions the Academic Advisors contacts and offers re-engagement support to the student.

119. Documentary evidence confirmed that students are required to have a 100% attendance during their placements, monitored via the PARE system, and any days missed must be made up before the end of their placement. From speaking to the student group, the inspection team heard of their experiences of the university attendance monitoring on campus as being chaotic, due to the electronic attendance system not working. A paper system was then put in place to record attendance, but this was not thorough enough and subject to more issues and an ineffective system.

120. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 5.6 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 [proposed outcomes](#) section.

Standard 5.7

121. As part of the documentary evidence submission, the inspection team were able to review the Marking Criteria FHEQ7, located on Blackboard, as the marking rubric to provide a consistent response to student feedback. The inspection team learnt that all assessments, formative, summative and placement activities, are mapped out and agreed upon by the examination officer and team, with an External Examiner review and endorsement. This is provided to students at timetabled and developmental dates, students can access all submission and feedback dates within Blackboard, including access to individual tutorials to discuss their marking and feedback.

122. As identified within Standard 4.10 of this report, students receive feedback from several sources, including the course team, Academic Advisor, PWLE and PEs, to provide a comprehensive approach to feedback that is timely and meaningful, to support students learning and development through the course. The inspection team were satisfied from their meeting with the PE group that whilst students are on placement they have regular supervisions, with PEs instilling reflective practice into their learning and development a key focus. The inspectors learnt from MA1 and MA2 PARE Direct Observations and Interim Placement Assessment Reports, that students work is assessed throughout the placement against the PCF and Professional Standards, to ensure they are demonstrating their competence and development to meet these, with reviews and feedback provided to

students at supervisions, the interim and end-point reviews. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

123. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the university Policy on Mitigating Circumstances, with guidance for students, including detailed guidance in the MA Social Work Handbook 2022-2023 for students and the University of Manchester's Policies and Procedures on Appeals. The inspection team concluded from the documentary evidence, and from their meeting with the student group that there was an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals. Within the meeting with students, they confirmed that they were aware of, and had used these processes, and the inspectors heard narrative evidence of these processes in practice for one of the attendees and their experience of seeking an extension for an assignment. The inspection team determined this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

124. As the qualifying courses are MA Social Work and a PG Dip Social Work (Exit Route), 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	Standard 5.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that the university and course have an effective and robust attendance monitoring system for students.	13 January 2024	Paragraph 118

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.1	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider that the written test in the admissions process is changed every year, and PWLE who are involved in the admissions process are given regular updates and reviews regarding values-based and unconscious bias training.	Paragraph 25

2	1.4	The inspection team are recommending that the course provider considers undertaking the DBS process at the same time for UK and International students, prior to the course starting, so there is equity. This may also reduce the impact of any undisclosed issues for students who have already started the course.	Paragraph 32
3.	1.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider that there is further training and development for staff involved in selection and admissions regarding the social work bursary so that applicants have access to quick, clear guidance and support in relation to the bursary.	Paragraph 38
4.	4.8	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider that there is clarity provided regarding a point within the course Assessment Strategy in which it states that the following is done, 'devise inclusive assessment and review assessment outcomes in relation to attainment profiles'.	Paragraph 92

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

1. 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](#).
2. A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken, and recommendations will be made to Social Work England's decision maker.
3. This section of the report will be completed when the conditions review is completed.

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	Standard 5.6: Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that the university and course have an effective and robust attendance monitoring system for students.	Condition met.

Findings

4. The conditions review was undertaken as a result of the condition set during the course reapproval as outlined in the original inspection report above.
5. The course provider has submitted a range of documentary evidence that assured the inspectors that there is now a robust and effective system in place for monitoring the attendance of students on the course.
6. Documentary evidence included the Attendance Monitoring Process for MA Social Work Students 2023-24 and the Attendance Monitoring Process - Academic Staff Guide. Narrative evidence provided within the conditions mapping form identified that students sign in at each individual teaching session with a QR code and receive an immediate automated response confirming their registration. With accountability for managing and monitoring attendance records clearly identified to the School Student Support and Wellbeing Team. The course provider confirmed within the documentary evidence and mapping form that all social work students will have their attendance monitored at each taught session.
7. Examples of the courses Email Triggers for Attendance Monitoring were provided as part of the documentary evidence submission. This information highlighted the process of escalation in attendance monitoring, as detailed in the Attendance Monitoring Process. The

inspectors were satisfied that the examples and emails provided gave insight into how these are used to communicate with students where exceptions in attendance occur, identifying implications and actions necessary. In addition, evidence of monitoring is reflected in the MASW Trigger Point Data 2023-24 document that gave an overview of each trigger point and by year.

8. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the condition set against the reapproval of the MA Social Work and PG Dip Social Work (Exit Route) is met.

Regulator decision

Condition met.