

Inspection Report

Inspection ID	SHUR1_BCP334
Course provider	Sheffield Hallam University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	Best Interests Assessor
Mode of study	Part time
Maximum student cohort	40
Date of inspection	12 and 26 November 2025
Inspection team	Becky Madey (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Nikki Steel-Bryan (Senior Education Quality Assurance Officer) David Childs (Lay Inspector) Surj Sall-Dullat (BIA Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Withdrawal of approval
Regulator decision:	Withdrawal of approval
Date of Regulator decision:	31 March 2026

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Introduction

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

Summary of Inspection

6. Sheffield Hallam University’s Best Interests Assessor course was inspected as part of Social Work England’s reapproval cycle, whereby all course providers with BIA courses will be inspected against the new education and training approval standards for BIA courses.
7. A remote inspection took place on 12 and 26 November 2025. The inspection team met on December 4, 2025, to complete the review of evidence against the education and training approval standards for BIA courses.
8. As part of this process, the inspection team gathered feedback from key stakeholders through meetings on inspection. This included course staff, members of

the senior leadership team, university admissions staff, students, employer partners and a person with lived experience. Written feedback was also gathered from students and the person with lived experience in advance of the inspection.

Inspection Findings

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

Standard 1. Admissions	Met or not met.
<p>1.1 Confirm that applicants have:</p> <p>i. The potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the 6 BIA capabilities set out in Annex 1 of these standards.</p> <p>ii. the potential to meet the eligibility criteria for the role set out in the relevant legislation governing BIA practice.</p> <p>iii. the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 1 for further information.</p>
<p>1.2 Confirm that applicants are and remain fully registered with a relevant regulatory body in line with the relevant regulations.</p>	<p><u>Met</u></p>
<p>1.3 Confirm that applicants have, and can demonstrate, suitable prior experience of the practical application of appropriate legislation and policy, specifically including but not limited to mental capacity, mental health and human rights legislation, and demonstrable experience of understanding risk in relation to these.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 1 for further information.</p>
<p>1.4 Confirm that applicants have a robust level of legal literacy in appropriate legislative and policy areas.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 1 for further information.</p>
<p>1.5 Ensure that employers, providers of observation opportunities, people with lived experience, and carers are involved in admissions processes.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 1 for further information.</p>
<p>1.6 Ensure that the admissions processes include assessment of the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes appropriate criminal conviction checks.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 1 for further information.</p>
<p>1.7 Ensure that there are equality, diversity and inclusion policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 1 for further information.</p>

<p>1.8 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place. This will include information about the award level and professional qualification, course content, teaching modes, location of study, assessment methods, duration, and observation requirements, including the expectations around arranging or securing observation opportunities.</p>	<p><u>Met</u></p>
<p><u>Key observations for standard 1</u></p> <p>10. We reviewed the course providers admissions process and saw evidence outlining the admissions process included an employer declaration, which was completed and signed by the applicant and their employer. We were told that some self-funding applicants could complete an employer declaration if they had confirmed line manager support. We received a written exercise, which other self-funding applicants would have to complete to apply for the course. The course provider confirmed that at the time of the inspection, all applicants, sponsored and self-funding, had completed the employer declaration as opposed to the written exercise during the admissions process.</p> <p>11. We saw the admissions checklist, which was used by the course provider's central admissions team to review each application. We were advised by the admissions team that any application queries would be sent to the course leader for review. We saw that the employer declaration required the applicant to supply a written narrative regarding fitness to practice and DBS issues. Bullet point declarations were used to measure suitability against the applicant's potential to meet the 6 BIA capabilities, prior experience and legal literacy. We heard that the course team did not have further mechanisms in place to test these declarations and the decision-making of employer partners. The inspectors determined that the written exercise would be sufficient to assess an applicant. However, this application route was not being used in practice. We were not assured that the employer declaration offered a robust assessment of the applicant's potential to meet the 6 BIA capabilities, their prior experience or their level of legal literacy. Therefore, standards 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4 were not met. (1.1, 1.3, 1.4)</p> <p>12. We heard that employers were not currently involved in the course provider's admissions process. Documentary evidence included feedback from employers, dated August 2025, regarding changes to the admissions process. The inspectors did not consider this to be evidence of meaningful consultation with employers relating to admissions, as the process had already been established by the course provider before receiving the feedback. The course team confirmed that they intended to review the admissions process with employers, but this had not yet been scheduled at the time of the inspection. (1.5)</p> <p>13. We heard that a person with lived experience suggested the final question on the written exercise within the admissions process, as well as indicative answers. This written exercise had not yet been used by applicants, and therefore, the inspectors deemed this to be insufficient</p>	

involvement. Standard 1.5 was not met due to the lack of meaningful collaboration with people with lived experience and employers within admissions processes. (1.5)

14. Regarding the suitability of applicants, sponsored students provided a declaration confirming that they have a suitable DBS and were required to outline any DBS and fitness to practice issues. Self-funding applicants provided an enhanced DBS from the past 12 months. We heard confirmation from students and employer partners that a DBS check was required during the admissions process. Social Work England guidance states that a course provider must have a robust and documented process for ensuring that a DBS check exists, that is valid and meets course provider requirements. We were not satisfied that, as the course provider did not request the DBS number of sponsored applicants, the process in place would ensure the validity of the information provided. Therefore, standard 1.6 was not met. (1.6)

15. The admissions team confirmed whether applicants were fully registered with a relevant regulatory body, and this information was stored by the course provider (1.2). Applicant data was stored by the course provider using a system called The Source, which could be used to view the demographics of the course. The admissions team confirmed that they would be reviewing how admissions processes across the university potentially limit access to a diverse applicant pool. We did not hear examples of implementing and monitoring EDI policies at the admissions stage of the process. Students were unable to confirm whether they had seen the course provider's EDI policy, although some assumed that it would be available to them. Employers confirmed that they did not have sight of university EDI data for applicants. The inspectors were not assured that the course provider implemented and monitored EDI policies in relation to applicants, and therefore, standard 1.7 was not met. (1.7)

16. We saw the online prospectus page for the course, which outlined details of the course to applicants. Students confirmed that they were given sufficient information during the application process to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the course (1.8).

Standard 2. Course governance, management and quality.	Met or not met
2.1 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 delivering, resourcing and managing the quality of the course.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 2 for further information.
2.2 Ensure that effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, people with relevant lived experience, including carers, and students.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for

	standard 2 for further information.
2.3 Ensure that admissions are aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of: i. wherever appropriate, local and regional capacity for observation opportunities; and ii. The availability of part-time or other flexible course arrangements to widen access wherever possible.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 2 for further information.
2.4 Ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the course is a relevant qualified professional (social worker, occupational therapist, psychologist or nurse) with appropriate experience of BIA practice.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 2 for further information.
2.5 Ensure that there is adequate provision of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 2 for further information.
2.6 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to mental capacity, mental health and human rights legislation and policy, including recent developments, and the practical application of this via the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, including giving support to undertake continuing professional development relevant to their role.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 2 for further information.
2.7 Ensure that students have the opportunity to provide feedback about the course and that this feedback is analysed, shared with employers and others involved in commissioning places on the course, and used to inform the management and development of the course.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 2 for further information
<u>Key observations for standard 2.</u>	
17. The course was delivered by the course leader, who was not a qualified BIA, and several specialist visiting lecturers (SVLs), who were qualified BIAs, and taught most of the BIA content. We heard that the SVLs were committed to teaching the November cohort of students, and future teaching would be confirmed before the start of each cohort. Due to financial uncertainty within the sector, it was presumed by SVLs that their involvement would continue, but this was not	

guaranteed. We did not receive evidence which demonstrated that SVLs have an appropriate teaching qualification, as required by standard 2.5. (2.5)

18. The senior leadership team acknowledged the risk associated with having only one permanently employed point of contact for the course, which had been escalated within the university. We heard that the course provider had attempted unsuccessfully to recruit for a one-year secondment to support the course. Documentation evidenced the course provider's governance structures, but the inspectors were not assured that these support mechanisms were working in practice following the inspection meetings. Standards 2.1 and 2.5 were not met due to a lack of effective processes in place to ensure stable and sustainable resourcing of the course. (2.1, 2.5)

19. The course leader, a registered social worker but not BIA qualified, took overall professional responsibility for the course. SVLs were used to bring BIA practice and real-world examples to the course and students. The course leader offered examples of attending BIA forums, being research active, and using LinkedIn and free resources to demonstrate how they remained updated regarding BIA practice. We considered the examples of engagement provided and deemed that this level of proximity was not sufficient to take overall professional responsibility for the course. Therefore, standard 2.4 was not met. (2.4)

20. We were satisfied that the course leader was supported to undertake relevant continuing professional development in their role. We read that the SVLs were offered several research and scholarly activity hours, as part of their educator contracts, to remain up to date. We heard examples of how the SVLs maintained their knowledge independently from the course provider. SVLs appeared to be unaware of the support offered by the course provider. We were not assured that SVLs were supported by the course provider to maintain their knowledge, and therefore, standard 2.6 was not met. (2.6)

21. We heard from the course team that employers and people with lived experience were not involved at the time of the inspection in formal processes relating to the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the course. Employer partners would submit email feedback to the course leader or attend an informal meeting. There was an intention to include these stakeholders in the future, but the mechanisms were not yet in place. We heard that students could provide feedback through regular, optional drop-in sessions, through module review and the PTES survey. The course team outlined changes made to the course following their module review. We heard mixed responses from students regarding whether they had received a feedback form, and they could not confirm further feedback mechanisms within the course. We were not satisfied that there were effective, robust and consistent improvement systems in place for the BIA programme, which involved employers, people with lived experience and students. Therefore, standard 2.2 was not met. (2.2)

22. Regarding student feedback, we understood that for drop-in sessions, formal minutes were not taken. The course team offered an example of increasing support for academic writing following student feedback. We heard that employers could email feedback to the course provider, but did not receive evidence of how student feedback was communicated to employers. The inspectors

were not satisfied that there was a robust process in place to gather student feedback, analyse and monitor the data and share the feedback with employers. Standard 2.7 was deemed not met. (2.7)

23. Evidence demonstrated that employers were consulted regarding capacity by email. The course team explained that their maximum cohort numbers had been limited due to resourcing and confirmed that demand would allow for further intakes. The course team acknowledged that they did not support the sourcing of observation opportunities when students face challenges in securing them. Where access to observation opportunities could not be assured during the admissions process, applicants would be rejected. Where observation opportunities could not be completed following enrolment, students would be advised to take a break in study. The inspectors were not satisfied that this informal arrangement with employers constituted a clear strategy in relation to ensuring students have observation opportunities, particularly regarding self-funding students. Standard 2.3 was not met. (2.3)

Standard 3. Observation opportunities.	Met or not met
<p>3.1 Ensure that each student has the opportunity to undertake a minimum of 2 practice observation opportunities, which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. enables the student to shadow a BIA or community DoLS assessment. ii. Provide practice experience that can be applied to a variety of settings and types of supervisory bodies. iii. enables the student to observe a suitably qualified and experienced relevant professional who has relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to demonstrate safe and effective practice. iv. enables the student to produce a detailed analysis of relevant practice issues, which forms part of the student's overall assessment. 	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 3 for further information.</p>
<p>3.2 Ensure that the number, duration and range of observation opportunities are appropriate to support the delivery of the course and the achievement of the learning outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Met</u></p>
<p>3.3 Maintain clear collaborative arrangements for planning and communication with providers, including a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all observation opportunities.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 3 for further information</p>

Key observations for standard 3.

24. Admissions criteria outlined the requirement for all applicants to have two observation opportunities available to them, both of which were completed during the course. For sponsored applicants, this was confirmed through an employer declaration. Self-funding applicants submitted a letter from a DoLS or BIA team manager. All students were required to complete verification forms for both observation opportunities. We heard from students that they had all undertaken a minimum of 2 observation opportunities (3.2).

25. The course team advised that they rejected applicants who could not confirm the availability of observation opportunities. The course provider did not offer support to students regarding sourcing observation opportunities. We heard that employers had previously declined to provide observation opportunities to those outside of their employment. Where students were unable to source observation opportunities in the course, they were advised to take a break in learning. The inspectors determined that this process could create a disadvantage for self-funding applicants and that further course provider oversight would be required for students who faced challenges in sourcing observation opportunities. Therefore, standard 3.1 was not met. (3.1)

26. Students chose one observation opportunity as the basis for their second assignment. The students would complete a DoLS Form 3, which is verified by the observing BIA and assessed by a viva presentation. We did not hear evidence to demonstrate how the course providers were using these mechanisms to approve and monitor observation opportunities. The verification form stated that students should have permission from the person with lived experience to observe each assessment. However, the inspectors agreed it was unclear how the course provider ensured that observations were undertaken ethically, ensuring appropriate consents. We did not receive evidence that demonstrated how collaborative arrangements are in place for the monitoring of both observation opportunities. The course team had considered creating a partnership agreement and setting regular employer partner meetings. The inspectors deemed standard 3.3 was not met as these mechanisms were not implemented at the time of inspection. (3.3)

Standard 4. Curriculum and assessment

Met or not met

4.1 Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of the role as set out in the 6 BIA capabilities set out at Annex 1, as well as a sound understanding of cross-national border issues in relation to practice in Wales, where this is appropriate.

Not met

See key observations for standard 4 for further information.

<p>4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners, people with lived experience of social work and carers are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 4 for further information.</p>
<p>4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 4 for further information.</p>
<p>4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy, best practice, and case law.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 4 for further information.</p>
<p>4.5 Ensure that the integration of policy, legal literacy and practice is central to the course.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 4 for further information.</p>
<p>4.6 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 4 for further information.</p>
<p>4.7 Provide staff involved in leading and delivering the training with sufficient protected training time to keep their own practice and knowledge up to date in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p> <p>See key observations for standard 4 for further information.</p>
<p>4.8 Ensure that assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to make robust, independent and well-evidenced</p>	<p><u>Not met</u></p>

assessments in the best interests of the person. This should include regular monitoring and evaluation of assessment standards to ensure that they remain robust and reliable.	See key observations for standard 4 for further information.
4.9 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 4 for further information.
4.10 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to assessment and evaluation, underpinned by skills, knowledge and an ability to interpret and respond appropriately to legislative and policy change and case law.	<u>Met</u>
4.11 Ensure that the course equips students with knowledge and skills in relation to identifying and anticipating areas of conflict arising from DoLS processes and outcomes, and supporting individuals, families, carers and agencies to understand the checks and balances of the DoLS system, to support a robust, independent and well-evidenced determination in the best interests of the person.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 4 for further information.
4.12 Clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the course.	<u>Met</u>
4.13 Clearly specify that any equivalent award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as a BIA.	<u>Met</u>
4.14 Clearly specify a process for the appointment of at least 1 external examiner who must be an appropriately experienced and relevant qualified professional.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 4 for further information
<p><u>Key observations for standard 4.</u></p> <p>27. Teaching materials demonstrated the use of case law within the course. The course team confirmed that research journals and articles were shared through the virtual learning environment, Blackboard, and the course leader provided examples of remaining research active. Students were assessed through a written assignment and a viva. Students confirmed that they used research and</p>	

case law within their course. The inspectors were satisfied that the course was designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to assessment and evaluation (4.10).

28. We received the module descriptor and assignment briefs, which outlined to students the assessment requirements and referral opportunities. Students must pass both assessments to become a qualified BIA. We were assured that the course provider had clearly specified requirements regarding progression and achievement within the course. The course provider confirmed that they did not offer equivalent or alternative awards within the course (4.12, 4.13).

29. We reviewed presentation slides which cited several cases relating to conflict but did not explicitly refer to Section 21A of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The understanding of Section 21A was deemed by the inspectors as integral to equipping students with knowledge and skills in relation to identifying and anticipating areas of conflict arising from DoLS processes and outcomes, and supporting individuals. Some students recalled their teaching regarding the conflict between professionals within their ethics session. Some students confirmed that Section 21A may have been mentioned, but believed that the teaching lacked detail. We heard that students were encouraged to consider conflict but were expected to learn about this through independent study. The inspectors were not assured that this was sufficient to meet standard 4.11. (4.11)

30. Employers agreed that, upon qualification, students had the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of the role as set out in the 6 BIA capabilities. Evidence submitted demonstrated how the BIA capabilities are mapped to the learning outcomes and content of the course. The course provider also submitted the teaching slides from their previous cohort. We heard that the teaching structure for the November cohort would change, with some delivery relating to ethics being removed to incorporate delivery from people with lived experience. (4.1)

31. As people with lived experience had yet to be involved in the content and delivery of the course, the inspectors deemed that principles of co-production, participation and empowerment, and holistic perspectives were not sufficiently included within the curriculum. As a result, we were not satisfied that sufficient evidence was received to demonstrate how the 6 BIA capabilities would be met for the cohort studying at the time of inspection. Therefore, standard 4.1 was not met. (4.1)

32. Within the presentation slides from a previous cohort, we saw that teaching materials focused on current practice, including case law. However, we were not assured that the course was being updated promptly, having not received evidence of the updated teaching materials for the November cohort. The course leader was not a qualified BIA but attended BIA forums and remained research active. Most of the teaching was delivered by SVLs, who were qualified BIAs. We heard that the SVLs amended and individualised presentation slides but were not involved in the review of the curriculum. We understood that SVLs were informed by the course leader of the content they would cover. The inspectors determined that the course leader's proximity to BIA practice was not sufficient to meet standard 4.4, and a process for continually updating the curriculum was not demonstrated. (4.4)

33. The BIA course consisted of 15 credits and was taught over 6 days. The course team explained that student achievement rates, as well as feedback from employers, students and external examiners, demonstrated that the duration of the course was sufficient. Due to the changes in delivery, outlined in paragraph 30, we were not satisfied that the course team had justified how they continued to ensure the new structure would remain sufficient to allow students to meet the BIA capabilities, particularly regarding ethics. Therefore, standard 4.6 was not met. (4.6)

34. Students explained how the varying teaching styles of the course team impacted how well they were able to link theory to practice. The students had varying experience levels, and some confirmed that hearing contradicting viewpoints during their sessions could be confusing. We heard from the course team that application of theory was not designed into a formal lecture but would be discussed organically when the cohort was split into smaller groups. The inspectors determined that standard 4.5 was not met, due to the lack of a formalised structure to consistently integrate policy, legal literacy and practice into the course. (4.5)

35. We heard that the course team sought feedback from employers regarding their proposed changes to the course outline. We understand that the observation verification form was implemented in response to employer feedback. The course team acknowledged that people with lived experience were not included in the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum. There was an intention to schedule stakeholder meetings twice a year. However, at the time of the inspection, these had not yet been scheduled. On this basis, standard 4.2 was not met. (4.2)

36. We reviewed the course provider's Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion framework and understood that students who disclosed additional needs would have a learning contract that was shared with the course leader. The course team confirmed that they would be willing to use an alternative method of assessment for students as a reasonable adjustment. We heard an example of additional support being provided to enrolled students from an African background following the identification of an attainment gap.. The inspectors determined that these examples demonstrated how the course team supports individual students, rather than analysing course data in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion to review the course design. The evidence presented did not demonstrate how the course provider was making the course inclusive by design, using an understanding of the challenges regarding all protected characteristics. We concluded that standard 4.3 was not met. (4.3)

37. We were satisfied that the course leader was provided with sufficient protected training time in their role following the examples heard regarding attending BIA forums and participation in research activities. However, we heard that SVLs were unaware of the support that the course provider offered regarding protected training time to maintain their knowledge and practice. We also heard that people with lived experience were not provided with the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning with permanent staff. We therefore deemed that standard 4.7 was not met. (4.7)

38. Evidence stated that the assessment’s pass rates were reviewed annually within the Course Improvement Plan, and the course team would consider whether the assessment needed to be amended. Feedback from the external examiner confirmed that assessments were suitable for the course. A verification form was introduced because of employer partner feedback to confirm that the student’s Form 3 was their own work and based on a real assessment, following the completion of their observation. We heard that SVLs often marked assessments and were generally consistent, although they would have preferred the marking criteria to be mapped to the 6 BIA capabilities. However, we did not hear how feedback from students was used to monitor and evaluate assessment standards. The course team acknowledged that people with lived experience were not yet involved in the co-production of assessments, and their feedback was not used within monitoring and evaluation. The inspection team determined that standard 4.8 was not met on this basis. (4.8)

39. We did not receive evidence of formative assessments within the course. We heard that feedback throughout the course was offered through optional drop-in sessions, which some students found helpful. Students could submit early drafts of work for academic writing support, but this was not reviewed by a subject expert. Students confirmed that they did not receive one-to-one feedback outside of their assessments and found their informal feedback unhelpful. We heard mixed views from students regarding the timeliness of feedback. We therefore deemed that standard 4.9 was not met. (4.9)

40. We saw the CV of the course provider’s external examiner at the time of the inspection. However, we did not receive evidence relating to the overarching process of appointing external examiners. Therefore, standard 4.14 was not met. (4.14)

Standard 5. Supporting students.	<u>Met or not met</u>
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing, including confidential counselling services. The course must also equip students to understand the potential impact of BIA practice on their own emotional and mental well-being, and the importance of identifying ways to handle this impact.	<u>Met</u>
5.2 Ensure that students have access to a system of academic and pastoral support for their progression, development and welfare.	<u>Met</u>
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students’ conduct, character and health.	<u>Met</u>

5.4 Make reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the specialist capabilities in accordance with relevant legislation.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 5 for further information
5.5 Provide timely information to students about their curriculum, observation requirements, assessments, and implications for their continuing practice, including arrangements for annotation of the register and requirements for periodic refresher training.	<u>Met</u>
5.6 Ensure that students are able to draw links between the completion of their BIA course and ongoing refresher training, and the ongoing requirements of their professional registration, such as continuing professional development.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 5 for further information
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 5 for further information
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	<u>Met</u>
5.9 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.	<u>Not met</u> See key observations for standard 5 for further information
<u>Key observations for standard 5.</u>	
41. Documentary evidence included links to the course provider's support services, covering student health and wellbeing, academic advising and library support. Students confirmed that they	

knew how to access these resources and had received an induction from library staff. We heard from the course team that every student was allocated an academic advisor and could attend optional drop-in sessions (5.1, 5.2).

42. We heard that employers had agreements in place with the course provider to report any fitness to practice or suitability issues regarding students. One student agreed that they knew how to inform the university if their circumstances regarding suitability changed throughout the course. The course provider shared their fitness to practise regulations, and we were satisfied that there was a process in place for ensuring ongoing suitability (5.3).

43. We saw the course webpage and an introductory presentation, which outlined information to students about the course and implications for their continuing practice (5.5). However, we heard mixed evidence from students regarding their continuing practice. Most students confirmed that they understood the requirements because they had been informed by their employer. Other students were either unable to confirm the requirements or supplied incorrect requirements to the inspection team. We determined that the students had not been able to draw links between the completion of their course and ongoing refresher training and requirements from the information provided by the course provider, and therefore, standard 5.6 was not met. (5.6)

44. Documentary evidence informed us of the process for registering with the disability team and developing a learning contract for students. During the inspection, we were unable to gather evidence of this process working in practice from the students, employers, or the course team. The course team confirmed that, as the course was part-time, employers would be expected to pay for the equipment required by the student. Where students were self-funding, the disability team may have been able to support with grant applications. Further assurance was required to ensure robust processes were in place to provide reasonable adjustments for students in the course. The inspection team determined that standard 5.4 was not met. (5.4)

45. We understand that students received written feedback on their assessments and could seek further advice from their marker or academic advisor. The course team confirmed that where feedback was not released within 15 working days, the relevant line manager would be notified with an explanation. We heard mixed views from students regarding the timeliness of feedback, and therefore, the inspectors deemed standard 5.7 was not met. (5.7)

46. The course provider submitted their academic appeals policy, as well as their Speak Out whistleblowing policy (5.8). During the inspection, we heard from the course team that a student raised a concern over a practice they had witnessed during an observation. We understood that the course team felt the incident described was an illegal practice and advised the student to raise this with their employer. We did not hear evidence of further support or follow-up related to this incident. The inspectors determined that the course provider did not have a robust process in place to ensure that the concern was appropriately forwarded, and therefore, standard 5.9 was not met. (5.9)

Outcome

The inspectors recommend that 11 standards were met and 30 standards were not met, which impacted all areas of the education and training standards.

The inspectors identified significant concerns regarding stakeholder involvement, particularly people with lived experience, as well as resourcing and student support throughout the course. The inspectors explored these themes with the course provider and stakeholders, and were not provided with sufficient evidence to ensure that effective course governance, management and quality assurance mechanisms were in place.

The inspectors recommend that approval of the course be withdrawn.

The regulator decision maker agreed with this [recommendation](#).