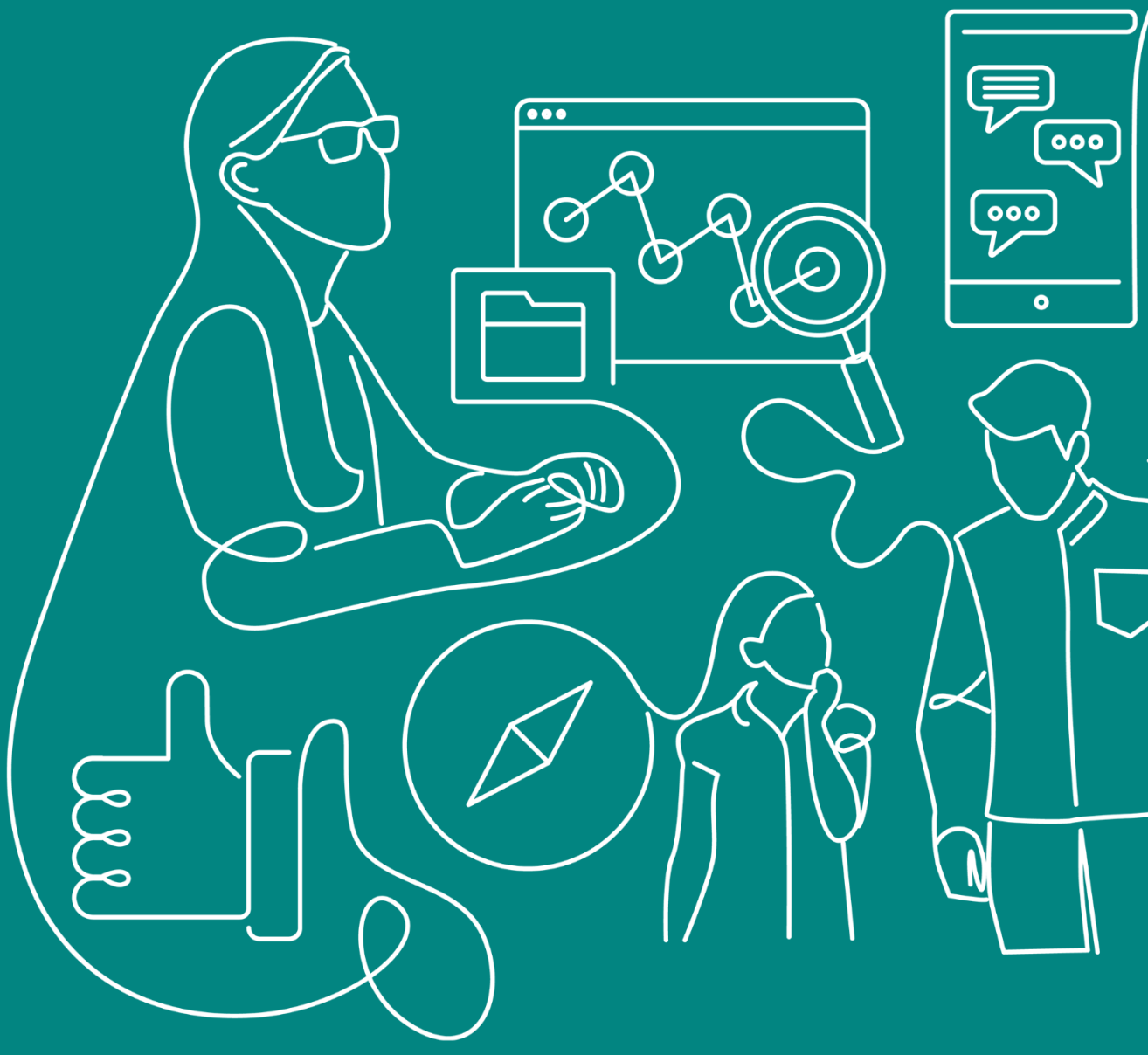
Social Work England

Education and training standards and guidance (2027) (published 2026)



These come into effect in Autumn 2027. We have published these in advance to allow course providers to prepare for our next inspection cycle due to start in Autumn 2027.

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About the standards

The education and training standards 2026 have been developed with key stakeholders including education and training providers, people with lived experience of social work and government.

The standards will mean that students who successfully complete a social work course can meet our professional standards and can apply to be registered with us. This means that we can assure the public's confidence that graduating students can practice safely and effectively when they apply to join the social work register.

Social Work England will approve qualifying social work courses against these standards once they come into effect in Autumn 2027.

These standards provide specific curriculum guidance of how to make sure students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of them before completing their course.

These standards should be read alongside the readiness for professional practice guidance. This guidance contains information on how course providers should integrate and assess students against the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements.

Below is a diagram that shows how these 3 elements work together to prepare students to meet the professional standards.



Language used

Through the standards and guidance, the term ‘we’, ‘us’, and ‘our’ refers to Social Work England and ‘you’ refers to the education and training provider, including those involved in leading or managing courses. The terms ‘register’ and ‘registration’ refer to the Social Work England’s register. Where we use the term ‘social worker’, we mean a professional who is on the Social Work England register.

We use the term “people with lived experience” rather than “experts by experience” which you may be familiar with. We prefer this term along with the term “learned experience” as we feel this ensures fairer representation and can include wider groups such as carers. We use this language following feedback from our National Advisory Forum. We understand that people may identify into more than one of these groups.

We use the term ‘student’ to describe anyone learning, studying or training on a course that will lead to them being eligible to apply to join our register. The term includes (all of the following):

- trainees
- apprentices
- practitioners in training or work-based learning

We do not use ‘student social worker’, ‘apprentice social worker’, or any other variation. This is because the title of social worker is protected.

We also use the term ‘educator’. We use this to mean an individual who is involved in teaching, assessing or aiding learning. This can include people who are permanently employed and others who help to deliver the course such as sessional or visiting lecturers, practitioners and practice educators.

We use the term ‘staff’ more broadly to refer to anyone involved in delivering the course. This could include educators as well as those involved in other areas, such as managing or administering the course. This also includes people with lived experience involved in teaching and learning.

The term ‘stakeholder’ is used to mean anyone involved in the course. This includes (all of the following):

- people with lived experience
- students
- employer partners
- placement providers
- practice educators

Where we are concerned with the engagement specific stakeholders, we have explained this within the standard guidance.

When we refer to 'knowledge, skills and behaviours' we mean the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are set out within the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements in Social Work England's guidance on readiness for professional practice. Where we refer to professional standards we mean Social Work England's professional standards.

Many statements use the verbs such as 'should', 'must', 'may' or 'could'. We use words such as 'should' and 'must' to provide clarity to course providers. This will enable them to meet the requirements of the standard. We use words such as 'may' or 'could' to indicate something which is recommended but not an absolute requirement.

Standard area 1 – Admissions

Standard: Admissions processes must be robust, transparent, and involve stakeholders. This is to ensure that applicants offered a place on the course have demonstrated how they meet entry requirements and demonstrated their suitability to study social work.

Outcome: Social work courses recruit students who have the capability and suitability to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to meet Social Work England's professional standards and become eligible to apply to join the social work register upon completion of the course.

Course providers will:

1.1: Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multidimensional assessment process, that applicants:

- Have the potential to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to meet the professional standards.
- Can demonstrate that they have a good command of English.
- Have the capability to meet academic standards.

Course providers should recruit students who have the capability and potential to meet the professional standards to become eligible to register upon completion of the course. Our readiness for professional practice guidance provides further detail about the knowledge, skills and behaviours that we expect students to develop in order to meet the professional standards.

Admissions processes should also allow applicants to demonstrate their commitment to social work values. These may be evidenced through examples from their personal or working life.

Throughout the admissions process, applicants must be assessed against a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours as outlined in the readiness for professional practice guidance. This could include their ability to analyse written information, communicate

using written and verbal methods, and their knowledge of the social work profession, relevant policies and legislation.

Tasks and activities within your admissions process should explore applicants' ability to develop core employability and work-based skills. This should include skills relevant to the core workplace and those which support engagement with the wider public, such as:

- communications skills in a range of contexts (for example, face to face, telephone, written)
- professionalism (including presentation of self)
- work ethic, punctuality and reliability
- adaptability
- digital competency (such as ability to use basic Microsoft Office programmes, the role of AI and understanding of basic confidentiality and privacy principles)
- time management

We do not expect applicants to be proficient in these areas and recognise the range of professional backgrounds and experiences that applicants will have. Instead, your focus should be on their ability to develop competency, as outlined in the readiness for professional practice guidance.

You must ensure that there is appropriate contrast in the tasks to ensure that your assessment process is holistic and assesses applicants' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Examples might include (but are not limited to):

- written exercises (such as personal statements or essays)
- formal tests
- interviews
- role play

We acknowledge that different courses (including undergraduate, postgraduate, apprenticeships and specialist routes) may have different assessment mechanisms or requirements within their admissions processes.

English language requirements

Applicants must demonstrate that they have a good command of English. For UK applicants, this will typically be GCSE English at grade C, or 4, or above.

Non-UK applicants must achieve a minimum score of 7.0 overall in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) assessment (or an equivalent assessment).

Your process should also make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to allow disabled applicants, for example deaf applicants, to demonstrate their English language and communication skills.

Maths requirements

We do not currently specify a standard for maths. You should therefore refer to your own organisation's policy for maths entry requirements and standards.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

We acknowledge that the admissions process for these courses may be influenced or led by external parties such as:

- employers
- the Department for Education
- Department of Health and Social Care

You must ensure, and be able to evidence, that you have adequate oversight of the admissions process. For example, where multiple partners are responsible for the delivery of specific aspects of the admissions process, you should be able to demonstrate how you have ensured fair and consistent assessment of applicants in line with the requirements of this standard.

1.2: Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes

Prior experience

Your admissions process must include consideration of applicants' prior relevant experience. You should be able to demonstrate how this has impacted on your decision making in relation to admissions. Prior experience could include, for example (either or both of the following):

- voluntary or paid experience working with children, families or adults within social care or other relevant settings
- having lived experience of social work

Applicants should demonstrate how their prior experience has helped them to develop the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours which will support them in meeting the professional standards on successful completing the course. These knowledge, skills and behaviours are set out in our readiness for professional practice guidance.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and accreditation of prior learning (APL)

Your course entry requirements should detail whether it is possible for applicants to apply for RPL or APL as part of their application to the course. This should be supported by evidence of the relevant institutional policies. You should ensure that, where you agree to implement RPL or APL processes, that you have mapped applicants' prior learning to your course. This is to ensure that there are no gaps in learning that would impact the applicants' capability to meet the professional standards upon completion of the course.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

We recognise that for some routes into social work, the Department for Education or Department of Health and Social Care set the minimum requirements in relation to prior relevant experience. You should be able to demonstrate how you clearly communicate these requirements to candidates through your admissions process.

1.3: Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes

Employers, placement providers and people with lived experience must be directly and regularly involved in the admissions processes.

Examples of involvement could include (but is not limited to):

- membership of interview panels
- group observation panels
- design and/or development of interview questions
- reviewing applications or written exercises
- observing role play activities and providing feedback on applicants' performance

It can also be beneficial to involve these groups in the review of your approach. For example, if you are thinking about reviewing your processes or introducing new panel interview questions, you could involve these groups in developing new questions or selection activities or ask them for their feedback on those which are already in place.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

We acknowledge that there are different admissions processes for alternative routes into social work so stakeholder engagement may vary. This might include organisations using their own employer or lived experience networks, rather than those managed by the course provider. Where this is the case the course provider should ensure that there is consistency. This is so all candidates receive a comparable admissions process in line with the requirements of the standard.

1.4: Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

You must carry out criminal record checks, at an 'enhanced' level, with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of your admissions process. It is important that your requirements for criminal record checks at admission are appropriate and safe for students entering a social work course. You must also have a process in place to carry out overseas criminal checks, where applicable.

Should there be any disclosures or concerns raised as part of DBS checks, or overseas criminal record checks, it can be beneficial to involve employers as part of your decision-making process. This is so that successful applicants are less likely to encounter any issues regarding their criminal record check when they go on placements (as placement providers may run their own checks which may have different requirements to yours) or start practising as a social worker.

When you make an admissions decision about someone who has a criminal record, you should consider whether it might affect (either or both of the following):

- their suitability to work with people with lived experience of social work
- the public's confidence in the profession

Conduct, health and character

You must have a process for assessing whether applicants' and students' conduct, health and character are suitable for them to train as social workers. This process can be referred to as a 'declaration of suitability for social work' where applicants and students are required to declare the following:

- Any ongoing criminal investigations, criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings received in the UK or in other countries. This declaration is in addition to providers carrying out criminal record checks for applicants.
- Any disciplinary record or unprofessional conduct, such as having disciplinary findings against them by a professional body or having employment terminated for unprofessional behaviour or misconduct.
- That they will seek medical guidance on any new or existing worsening health condition that occurs during their course, including during practice placements.
- Whether they have ever been removed or withdrawn from a professional education programme previously.
- If they have lived experience of social work services due to concerns about their own conduct or care of a child or vulnerable adult.

In line with legislation, applicants and students should not be required to disclose any physical or mental health conditions. However, it is reasonable to expect applicants and students to declare that they are willing and able to identify and manage their own needs in a way that avoids any risk to people with lived experience of social work or themselves. This should be supported by any reasonable adjustments that the applicant or student needs.

You should consider involving occupational health services at the admissions stage if you or an applicant would like to discuss any support they may need during the course.

You should make applicants and students aware of the consequences of not declaring something which may affect their suitability for social work or their ability to meet the requirements of the course. This includes declaring findings by other regulatory bodies. For example, if another regulator (that they are or have been registered with) finds that their fitness to practise is impaired.

Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of declaring any needs which can impact their ability to practise safely and effectively. In line with our knowledge, skills and behaviour statements, admissions processes should explore how applicants 'recognise and communicate when and how health and wellbeing might impact on their practice, taking steps to seek support, to ensure safe and effective practice' (Behaviour statement 1.13).

If an applicant or student chooses not to declare an issue relating to conduct which later comes to light, including physical or mental health conditions which may impair their ability to practise safely, you should make them aware that they may then find themselves subject to fitness to practise proceedings in line with your organisations fitness to practise policy.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

For social work apprenticeships and other employment-based routes, if a student already holds an enhanced level DBS check with their employer, and this check is deemed satisfactory, then you may not need to carry out an additional DBS check during the admissions process. You must, however, be able to demonstrate that you have a robust and documented process for ensuring that such a DBS check exists, that it is valid, and that it meets your requirements.

1.5: Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored

It is important to ensure that your admissions processes are in line with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. They should also be accessible and take into account different needs.

You should have systems in place for responding to enquiries about support and reasonable adjustments throughout the admissions process. Where the admission process is jointly led (for example, apprenticeship and fast track routes), you should be able to demonstrate how you have ensured that all parties offer a consistent response to such queries.

You should have processes in place to ensure that anyone involved in your admissions process has the necessary knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion principles.

The admissions process should provide applicants with the opportunity to request any reasonable adjustments they need for the admissions process. It should be clear to applicants that talking about their needs will not impact on decisions taken about whether they are offered a place on the course.

You should have systems in place to regularly review the effectiveness of equality, diversity and inclusion policies and processes. You could involve relevant stakeholders

in these reviews. Such reviews should be informed by analysis of relevant admissions data, with evidence available of how any concerns are addressed for future cohorts. Relevant data could include (but is not limited to):

- ethnicity
- socio-economic background
- disability
- age
- gender

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

Where partner organisations carry out stages of the selection process (such as for apprenticeships and specialist routes), you should ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes being able to answer queries or signpost queries to the relevant people/teams and the need to provide reasonable adjustments to applicants.

Where reasonable adjustments have been provided, it may be appropriate for partner organisations to share this information with you, with the applicant's consent.

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

As part of your admissions process, you should provide applicants with information which includes (but is not limited to):

- information about the professional standards, the role of Social Work England and professional regulation
- that completing the course successfully is not a guarantee that they will be able to register with Social Work England
- information about registration requirements
- the role of a social worker, and the types of tasks/responsibilities that a social worker has, including that the social work qualification is generic and prepares them for practice in all social work contexts
- placement arrangements, including associated travel costs. If your students will need to travel to placements by car due to the geography and transport infrastructure of your locality, you may want to consider asking students to declare as part of the admissions process that they have a driving licence, the use of a car, and appropriate insurance. This does not apply to students who are unable to drive because of a health condition or impairment
- the employability and work-based skills as outlined under standard 1.1
- the costs of the course, including accommodation and other associated costs where relevant, and any options for funding, such as bursaries

- the structure, content and delivery of the course, including placements, and the methods of assessment
- expectations in relation to attendance, both for taught elements of the course and placements

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

We acknowledge that there are different admissions processes for alternative routes into social work and that the information to promote these routes may be developed by other departments. For example, the Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). It is the course provider's responsibility to ensure that applicants can access this information and, where necessary, any additional information is provided. This may be achieved through providing information on your institutions website or by providing direct links to department websites.

Where you are offering a post-graduate apprenticeship, you need to ensure that applicants are provided information that explains that the apprenticeship standard within the qualification is level 6, while the final award is a level 7 post-graduate qualification.

Standard area 2 – Practice learning environment

Standard: The learning environment must provide education and training opportunities that enable students to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours across all areas of social work. Practice settings must enable students to gain the required depth and breadth of experience needed in supportive, supervised and safe environments that will allow them to meet Social Work England's professional standards.

Outcome: Social work courses deliver, in partnership with practice placement providers/employers, practice learning experiences that support readiness to practice at the point of graduation. This includes providing learning opportunities that reflect and allow students to learn from the diversity of the communities they will work with.

Course providers will:

2.1: Ensure that students spend at least 200 days gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings. This may include up to 30 skills days

Each student must have (all of the following):

- placements in 2 or more practice settings providing contrasting experiences
- a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting

- the statutory placement must provide sufficient exposure to statutory social work tasks, involving high-risk decision making and legal interventions, which prepare them for the realities of high-volume, high-risk work

Days spent in practice settings

Students must spend at least 200 days in practice during their course. If needed, up to 30 of these days can be allocated to students developing their skills for practice, also known as 'skills days'. A practice setting is a setting where social workers are present. It is not appropriate for students to undertake placements where a social worker is not fully engaged in the services being provided.

As outlined within our readiness for professional practice guidance, by the end of their 200 days in practice, students should demonstrate that they competently meet all of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that you have mapped for the practice learning environment. This should be considered in line with your final arrangements for confirming that students have successfully completed 200 days of practice.

Skills days

Students could undertake up to 30 skills days as part of the required 200 days of practice learning. Skills days can be delivered in different ways and in different settings, depending on the route. Skills days should be clearly defined within the course and attendance monitored. They should enable students to develop skills needed for their practice as social workers as outlined in our readiness for professional practice guidance.

Statutory placements

A statutory placement is one that takes place in a setting where social workers carry out duties required by law. These placements must give students direct experience of tasks that involve:

- legal responsibilities
- high-risk or complex decision-making
- statutory interventions

'High-risk decision-making' is defined as those decisions which balance care vs control and rights vs risks, and which involve appropriate knowledge, understanding and application of the law in relation to areas such as, deprivation of liberty, best interest assessments, child protection planning, and court proceedings.

'Complex decision-making' involves navigating situations with multiple interconnected factors, uncertainty, and potentially conflicting objectives.

We would expect a statutory placement to take place in a local authority or in settings delivering delegated statutory functions on behalf of the local authority. For the purposes of this guidance, that would include NHS Mental Health Trusts.

Settings must involve a sufficient amount of work on either s17 and s47 cases (under the Children Act 1989) or on delivering requirements of the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Mental Health Act 1983.

The setting must offer a sufficient number of statutory social work tasks which:

- involve experience of high-risk or complex decision-making
- require case records to be updated by the student, under appropriate supervision
- require students to undertake assessments of need
- require students to respond to and participate in plans to address need, harm, neglect or abuse
- expect students to promote positive and planned change
- undertake appropriate legal interventions

By 'sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks', we mean that students must be involved in enough statutory tasks to enable them to experience and understand the realities and impacts of high volume, high-risk work, while under appropriate supervision, within a statutory environment. We do not set a minimum number of statutory tasks. Instead, we will consider this within the overall context of the placements you provide.

Course providers may identify a setting not referenced in the examples above. It is the responsibility of the course provider to apply a robust process to assess whether the placement can be defined as statutory, using the guidance in relation to statutory tasks outlined above. All students must undertake at least one placement which provides them with experience of statutory social work tasks.

When you provide Social Work England with a pass list, you are confirming that each student on that list has successfully met the 200-day placement requirements set out in this standard and there are no exceptions.

Contrasting experience

To ensure that students gain sufficient experience to work in any setting, their placements should offer different, contrasting learning opportunities. For example:

- a student could work in a local authority setting in one placement and in the private, voluntary or independent sector for their other placement
- a student could work in child protection for one placement and with children with different needs (such as in a children's disability team) for their other placement
- a student could work with children in one placement and with adults in their other placement

Private, voluntary and independent sector (PVI)

We recognise that some organisations within the PVI offer placements that deliver statutory work and that they provide valuable learning experiences for students.

A placement at a PVI can be defined as being in a statutory setting if:

- the local authority has delegated a statutory function to the PVI
- there is opportunity at the PVI for students to be directly involved with children and families who are subject to s17 and s47 (under the Children Act 1989)
- there is opportunity at the PVI for students to be involved in delivering requirements of the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Mental Health Act 1983 such as:
    - carers' charities which have been commissioned by the local authority to undertake carers' assessments
    - advocacy organisations that employ individuals to work as independent mental capacity advocates
    - hospices that require individuals to undertake Mental Capacity Act assessments
- there is opportunity at the PVI for students to be involved in court-ordered work or work with offenders

In addition to the above, a placement in a PVI should require case records to be updated by the student, under appropriate supervision.

Mandatory attendance

It is mandatory for students to complete the 200 days in practice-based learning, including any skills days if used. Placement patterns may vary across course providers but regardless of route, the 200 days must be clearly identified and monitored for attendance.

A placement day should mirror the usual working pattern of the placement provider, therefore working patterns may vary depending on the placement provider. Ideally, a placement day is usually taken to mean no less than 6 hours (plus a lunch break), but this should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Shared placements

You may wish to consider placements that are shared between an organisation that meets the statutory setting or delegated statutory setting criteria, as set out above, and an organisation that does not. This is also known as a 'hub and spoke' model. Both components of the placement should be planned in collaboration to ensure cohesion in learning and assessment.

The placement must be overseen by a single practice educator to ensure appropriate learning opportunities, sufficient number of statutory tasks and consistent development for the student. Workplace supervision needs to be available in both settings to support the student to practice safely.

Onsite/offsite placements

You should be clear about your expectations in relation to physical attendance at placements and whether hybrid or remote working is permitted. We expect students to

spend a minimum of 60% of their placement time working in an in-person manner. This should include face to face working with colleagues and service users.

We would not expect students to be working without in-person support. You should have clear processes for agreeing and monitoring student's face to face working with placement providers. We do not specify how and where you undertake monitoring, but you must be able to evidence your processes to do so.

Where students are not working on site, we expect that they remain fully engaged in placement-related activity. This might include engaging in virtual meetings with colleagues. These may be meetings focused on specific cases, to engage in supervision, facilitated case discussions or regular team meetings with other social workers and relevant colleagues in their team.

We also expect that time which is not spent onsite in a face-to-face manner may support the completion of administrative tasks, such as planning or writing case records.

We would expect all hybrid working arrangements to be overseen by a practice educator or work-based supervisor and the activities undertaken during remote/offsite working should be planned and intentional.

Those who need reasonable adjustments would be exempt from the 60% requirement if an adjustment is identified and appropriate. In such cases, course providers should be able to evidence how agreements have been reached and provide details of how they are assured that adaptations still enable students to experience a high-quality placement.

In the exceptional situations where placements are offered in services that are unable to provide the expected 60% in-person working arrangements, there needs to be evidence as to why the placement is appropriate and how it meets the learning outcomes and knowledge, skills and behaviours. There would also need to be clear support identified to ensure appropriate supervision.

Simulated placements

We recognise that there can be difficulties in sourcing placements for students, and while simulation can be a valuable educational tool, it cannot replicate the complexity, unpredictability and relational aspects of real-world social work practice. Therefore, the use of simulated placements are not accepted as part of the 200 days practice learning requirement under this standard, with the exception of simulated learning as part of skills days (if used).

Consideration of students lived experience

You should be aware that factors relating to students lived experience could impact their placement experience. Placement planning should be collaborative and trauma-informed, ensuring the student feels safe and supported in their learning environment. You should consider sourcing alternative placements to avoid a student

completing a placement in a setting where they have received, or currently receive services, as appropriate.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

We acknowledge that on some course routes, students are working within a practice learning environment throughout the course. We require the 200 days of practice-based learning to be clearly defined with identified learning opportunities in line with the guidance. This should be communicated clearly to students and staff involved in practice-based learning, both verbally and through supporting placement documentation.

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

Placements should provide suitable learning opportunities to allow students to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to meet the professional standards. These knowledge, skills and behaviours are outlined within our readiness for professional practice guidance.

You should have documentation that sets out administrative and practical information about the placement and what the student should expect to do and learn during the placement.

Placement content

Placement content will vary between providers. But it is important that you have plans and documentation to support your agreements with placement providers. These should show how and when students will have learning opportunities which allow them to develop and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours. These are outlined within our readiness for professional practice guidance.

Practice educators and placement supervisors should use this documentation to support and monitor students, and that students use it to guide their own learning.

The level of responsibility that students will have when undertaking these opportunities will vary depending on their skills and experience. More details about students' responsibilities are listed below in 2.4.

Placement audit

You must ensure that placement opportunities are audited through regular ongoing quality assurance processes. This will ensure that students gain experience in practice settings that prepare them to meet our professional standards, register with us and practise as social workers.

2.3 Ensure that while on placements, practical arrangements are in place to ensure that students have appropriate induction, supervision, support and access to resources

Documentation in place to support placement learning, such as a placement learning agreement (PLA), should provide details of the requirements of the standard.

You may wish to consider including the following within agreements:

- the names of the staff involved in the placement, including their contact details
- practical and administrative information about the placement, including the main policies that the student needs to be aware of and abide by
- details relating to training on the use of organisational systems
- the structure in place that will enable the learning outcomes to be met, for example a timetable setting out when and how students will have access to practice learning opportunities to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes
- details of induction and ongoing supervision arrangements
- any significant dates and targets that the student needs to be aware of or meet

This document could form part of the agreement you have with placement providers which is covered in more detail under standard 3.2.

Induction

Induction is a key aspect of ensuring that students can safely undertake placements. You should expect placement providers to offer a full induction to ensure all students have the information needed so they can engage with their placement. You may wish to include this requirement in your agreements with placement providers.

Induction could include:

- familiarisation with the main learning environment(s)
- meetings with practice educators and other staff who will be supporting or interacting with students
- provision of a structure chart for the placement organisation
- granting access for students to records and IT systems, as appropriate
- provision of information about the relevant policies that the students need to comply with and where to find them, such as:
    - information systems use (including use of artificial intelligence (AI))
    - data protection
    - health and safety
    - consent
    - confidentiality
    - how to report sickness and other absence
    - dress code behaviour in the workplace

    - reporting concerns
    - whistleblowing
- provision of information about the delivery of the placement, such as timetables and learning locations if the placement includes more than one learning environment

Social work supervision

Students must be supervised appropriately during their placement to ensure the safety of people with lived experience of social work and their own safety. Appropriate social work supervision is also key to ensuring that students get a good learning experience and can access appropriate learning opportunities.

The learning and development of each student on a placement should be overseen by a named practice educator who is a registered social worker and has overall responsibility for the student's supervision.

Generally, we would expect supervision to take place on a weekly basis. The practice educator should determine the degree of social work supervision required, particularly if a student requires any special arrangements for their supervision or needs a greater amount of supervision than is generally provided.

Work-based supervisors

In some cases, the day-to-day monitoring and supervision of a student during placement may not be provided by the practice educator, but by a work-based or on-site supervisor (who may or may not be a registered social worker). This supervisor is defined as someone who works in the placement setting and who will be in frequent contact with the student.

Where a work-based supervisor is used, the student must also have an allocated practice educator who remains responsible for supporting the placement and assessing the student. A work-based social work supervisor may therefore offer task-based supervision and tuition, whereas the practice educator may focus on supporting the student to make links between theory and practice, reflect on the work undertaken and consider their ongoing learning needs and professional development.

You may find it helpful to set out in your agreement with placement providers the role and responsibilities of work-based supervisors, which might include:

- having a role in the student's induction and helping them settle into the placement setting
- working closely with the student, providing feedback on their progress and supporting their learning
- understanding the learning outcomes for the placement (and ideally the whole course, for context) and the learning needs of the student they are supervising
- liaising with the practice educator if any concerns about a student arise

- being clear about the difference between social work supervision and management oversight, and any tripartite arrangements

Access to resources

Students should have appropriate access to resources to allow them to undertake learning opportunities during the placement. This includes access to IT systems, records and relevant documentation. Students should also have access to appropriate learning resources within the placement environment, such as books and journals.

Students should have an appropriate space to work, such as at an allocated desk or area in an office environment.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

For students who are studying on an apprenticeship or specialist route, there is an expectation that they receive the same level of induction, supervision and support as those on traditional routes. You should ensure that placement parameters are clearly defined so that all parties recognise it as a learning environment.

Students and staff should be clear about the arrangements in place for tripartite meetings and off the job learning.

2.4: Ensure that on placements, students' workload and responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training

Workload

An appropriate workload for the student should be agreed between the practice educator and the work-based supervisor. They should review the student's workload throughout the placement to ensure it is meeting the student's learning needs.

A placement day should mirror the usual working pattern of the placement provider, therefore working patterns may vary depending on the placement provider. However, students are not part of the normal staff team. They should not be asked to cover staff shortages, absences, or respond to pressures being experienced in the team or setting, unless doing so is consistent with meeting their learning needs.

Allocation of workloads for students should not, therefore, be determined by the volume of work within a team or setting but should be at the professional judgement of the practice educator and work-based supervisor and appropriate to the student's level of capability and agreed learning needs.

Responsibilities

You should ensure that students work within a scope of practice that is appropriate to their level of skills and experience.

The level of responsibility that students have when undertaking learning opportunities will vary depending on whether they are doing their first or final placement, and the stage they are at within that placement. At no point, should a student have sole responsibility or carry out social work tasks independently.

A student's responsibility should gradually increase, under appropriate supervision, as their knowledge, skills and behaviours develop. The level of supervision and responsibility given to a student should be tailored to that individual and their needs. The progressive thresholds, outlined within our readiness for professional practice guidance, provide further guidance on developing competence.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

Course providers should have arrangements in place to ensure that students who are placed in settings linked to their substantive post have the same experience as other students.

There should not be an assumption that a student can take additional responsibility due to their familiarity with a setting, nor should students be expected to complete work that is linked to a previous/substantive post.

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

When designing your approach under this standard, you should refer to the knowledge, skills and behaviours statements within our readiness for professional practice guidance.

It is important to ensure the safety of people with lived experience of social work who meet students during placements. People's safety must not be put at risk by students' performance, lack of knowledge, health or conduct.

Students should be aware of how they should communicate and interact with people with lived experience of social work before their placement starts.

Health, suitability and Disclosure and Barring Service checks

As a part of your admissions process, you will have carried out a criminal record check with the DBS (or for students on apprenticeships or other employment-based routes, ensured that a valid DBS check is held by the employer). However, placement providers may have criminal records check requirements that are different to your own. They may decide a further DBS check is necessary for some (or all) students for them to undertake the placement safely.

If a placement provider does not feel a student is safe to undertake the placement because of their DBS check (despite the student passing the DBS check to be admitted to your course), then an alternative placement for that student should be identified. In

this instance, you may also wish to consider whether your requirements for criminal records checks at admission are appropriate and safe for students entering a social work course.

If the DBS check carried out by the placement provider reveals additional/new information about the student, you must consider their suitability to continue the course in accordance with standard 5.3.

Additionally in line with the requirements of standard 5.3, you should also have processes in place to reassess students' suitability for social work practice. This may include requesting a self-declaration to confirm that a student's circumstances have not changed ahead of placement.

You should check that the student does not have any health conditions that could impact them safely undertaking the placement. You may need to consider making specific arrangements for students with health conditions or reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. This will enable them to safely undertake the placement.

Student behaviours

You should ensure that you have assessed that students are developing competency in the behaviours outlined within our readiness for professional practice guidance. You should do this prior to students commencing their first placement.

Students should also be made aware of the expectations of being present in an employment and service delivery setting. Expectations could include (any of the following):

- following the required policies and protocols
- maintaining good time keeping and being punctual
- following instructions and being able to receive feedback from practice educators and other staff
- being courteous to practice educators and other staff
- professional integrity
- this should also include the employability and work-based skills as outlined in standard 1.1

Assessment of readiness for practice

Before starting their first placement, you must assess each student's preparedness to safely undertake practice learning. Assessing students' preparedness could include the following:

- testing students' knowledge of the theoretical learning they have completed so far on the course, for example through a written examination
- testing students' basic understanding of the professional standards for social workers, and associated knowledge, skills and behaviours, through observed small group discussions, reflective essays, presentations or research projects

- observing students in simulated service delivery settings engaging with people with lived experience of social work, for example through role play scenarios

Alongside formal assessment mechanisms, you may choose to ask teaching staff for their views on each student's preparedness and discussing any areas of concern.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

Where students are on a work-based qualification, you must ensure that there is still a formal process in place for assessing students' readiness for professional practice. This includes where placement takes place within their usual place of work.

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.

Registration

You should ensure and be able to demonstrate that all practice educators, whether employed by yourselves, a local authority or acting as an independent practice educator, are registered with Social Work England at the point of taking a student on placement.

Training

The role and responsibilities of the practice educator are set out in the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) for social work. This was published by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in 2022.

Practice educators are expected to have completed a training course on practice education that is (both of the following):

- aligned to the PEPS
- relevant to the level of student they are working with (such as students on placement 1 or placement 2)

We expect that all new practice educators are trained. This should be followed up with regular refresher training and support. We understand that it is the responsibility of the employer providing the placements, rather than you as education provider, to train practice educators. We recognise some course providers deliver their own training for practice educators. Where this is not the case, you will need to have agreements in place with your placement providers so they can provide this training.

Currency

You should work with employers to ensure that practice educators are sufficiently skilled and experienced and maintain their currency as practice educators.

You should have a process that checks that practice educators are supported, trained and able to keep their practice up to date.

You should evaluate the effectiveness of the processes in place through your evaluation of placements.

It is important that you have a shared understanding with employers of the role and responsibilities of practice educators and the time that they need in their working day or week to effectively carry out the role and promote the value of this role with employers.

Engagement with practice educators

You should engage directly with practice educators for a range of purposes which could include:

- providing information and training in the curriculum, including assessments, and the expected learning outcomes for students while on placements
- providing training in teaching competencies, such as communication, giving feedback and principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
- supporting their continuing professional development
- advising them about local and national support networks and how to access them
- engage them in the development and management of the course and individual placements
- seeking and providing feedback on placements
- bringing all your practice educators together centrally to allow individuals to network and share advice and experiences
- annual briefings or refresher sessions to bring practice educators and on-site supervisors up to date with the course
- mentorship schemes for practice educators, particularly for those new to the role or to your course

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

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements in our readiness for professional practice guidance outline that students should:

- understand how to recognise organisational wrongdoing and cultures of unsafe practice
- know when to whistle blow, raise concerns and seek support
- challenge decisions, actions or behaviours which are not in the best interests of people receiving services

Challenging unethical practice and reporting concerns is a key element of the professional standards for social workers. However, some students may find it difficult to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing.

You should check that the appropriate policies and processes are in place at your placement providers. You should also consider where these are referenced within placement documentation.

Students should be told about these policies and procedures at induction. You should support students to raise concerns. You should make sure that students know who to report their concerns to, and how these concerns will be considered and acted on.

You should have your own concerns process and whistleblowing policy. These should be designed to make sure that students are not penalised for raising concerns. Other support for students may include:

- training on raising concerns and the importance of being open when things go wrong
- dedicated reporting or communication methods for students to raise concerns
- advice from members of staff when situations arise which may be cause for concern

Your concerns process should make sure that, where necessary, the concern will be forwarded to another appropriate person or organisation.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

Due to fast track and apprenticeship routes having additional factors such as employment contracts, it may be best for the course leader or other managers at your organisation to deal with concerns.

We recognise that concerns will not always be dealt with in the same way, and the appropriate way to deal with a concern is likely to depend on the nature of the concern and where it originates from.

Regardless of the route and process in place, we expect the requirements of the standard to be met.

2.8: Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory

You should ensure that students attend and positively engage with the parts of the course that are essential to gaining the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours. This will ensure that students are ready to meet the professional standards by the time they qualify. You should identify the parts of your course where attendance is mandatory and make this clear to students.

Students must spend at least 200 days in practice over the duration of their course. Up to 30 of these days can be allocated to students developing their skills for practice, also

known as ‘skills days’. It is mandatory for students to attend all placement days, including any skills days (where these are provided).

You must have systems in place to monitor attendance in all settings and to take appropriate action if students fail to attend the mandatory parts of the course. If a student has genuine reasons for failing to attend a mandatory part of the course, you must make arrangements so they can gain this knowledge before they complete the course.

Students should also be made aware of any consequences of missing mandatory parts of the course. In some cases, it may be appropriate to state that attendance on specific days or modules is mandatory. In other cases, it may be more appropriate to expect a student to achieve an average attendance for the duration of the course.

Poor attendance can be a sign that a student is experiencing health concerns. Students should be encouraged to declare any health concerns that are affecting their attendance. Poor attendance can also indicate an issue with a student’s character or conduct or can be indicative of wider personal issues. You should consider this when investigating poor attendance and take appropriate action if a student’s character or conduct gives cause for concern.

Skills days

It is not mandatory that you offer skills days. But if you choose to offer them, then these are in place of a day in placement. Therefore, these need to be equivalent to a day in placement in terms of length and learning. If students fail to attend, you must ensure you have mechanisms in place to allow them to make up the skills day.

Standard area 3 – Course governance, management and quality

Standard: Social work courses must be governed, resourced and managed using effective and transparent processes in collaboration with placement providers or employers and people with lived experience of social work. There must be processes to monitor, manage and evidence the quality and delivery of courses.

Outcome: Social work courses are governed, managed, continually improved and administered to a consistent quality. They are also resourced sufficiently to ensure they meet the expectations of Social Work England.

Course providers will:

3.1: Ensure that a lead registered social worker is in place to hold overall professional responsibility for the course and that courses are supported by a management and governance framework

We recognise that course providers will have different approaches to ensuring that their courses are effectively led and that the titles of such roles may differ. To meet the requirements of the standard, it is important that your course is led by people with direct experience of the social work profession.

Lead social worker/professional lead

You should appoint a lead social worker to your management team. They will take overall professional responsibility for the course and be involved in the development and delivery of the curriculum. This person should be a registered social worker and be responsible for (all of the following):

- providing expert professional advice on all aspects of your course and curriculum
- keeping up to date with practice and policy developments and using this information to assist with the review and ongoing development of your curriculum and courses
- engaging with key stakeholders including social workers, employers and placement providers, to help ensure that the course reflects regional issues and priorities
- spending time back in practice to keep up to date with current practice and policy developments and to maintain/update practice skills and experience
- providing expert professional advice on issues relating to students' suitability and fitness to practise

Course leader

Course leaders should be registered social workers with appropriate additional educational qualifications and experience. However, we recognise that there may be circumstances where it is possible and appropriate for a course to be led by someone who is not a registered social worker. This is where the role of the lead/professional lead would then come in to ensure the course remains relevant and up to date.

Course governance

It is important that courses are governed and managed effectively and that responsibility for each aspect of the course is clear. You should have a management and governance framework in place which sets out clear roles and responsibilities for both individuals and groups.

You should be able to evidence this through documentation. This should include the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups involved in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.

3.2: Ensure that there are agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. Ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown

Your agreements should include the terms for the placement. This should include (but is not limited to):

- naming specific individuals at your organisation and at the placement provider who are the point of contact for any questions or issues that arise
- specifying the process by which you or the placement provider can raise concerns about how the placement is being run, the content of the placement or the behaviour of participants, and how concerns will be addressed
- specifying the process by which disagreements between practice educators and course providers and/or higher education institutions about whether a student should pass or fail a placement will be resolved
- the arrangements in place for safeguarding and health and safety (manual handling, health and safety policy, first aid, occupational health)
- specifying how students will be provided with opportunities to critically reflect on their own practice
- specifying arrangements in place for student supervision and support
- compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 regarding information processed by the placement relating to students undergoing placements
- how all parties will work to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
- the arrangements in place for the course provider to share information about curriculum content with those involved in supporting student placements

We recognise that the agreements in place with placement providers may look different and have different names based upon local arrangements. The requirements outlined above may also be evident across multiple documents, not just contained within one agreement. Some examples of agreements that may demonstrate the requirements of the standard include (but are not limited to):

- memorandum of understanding (MoU)
- memorandum of cooperation (MoC)
- memorandum of agreement (MoA)

- service level agreements (SLA)
- teaching partnership memorandum
- partnership memorandum/agreement
- consortium agreement

Placement breakdown

You should have a clear process in place for dealing with placement breakdowns that is agreed with placement providers. This includes the arrangements in place to manage suspension, termination or transfer of a student's placement.

You should also have a process for students to raise their own concerns regarding their learning and supervision while on placement.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

For fast track and apprenticeship routes, placement agreements should reflect any arrangements that are specific to the nature of the course. This may include (but is not limited to):

- specifying how the funding for the placement should be used within the placement provider organisation
- how students will be supported when working within the same organisation as their substantive post (as outlined within standards 2.3 and 2.4)

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

Agreements

You should ensure that placement providers have safety policies and procedures in place. These should allow you to identify and deal with risks to the health and wellbeing of students. The policies and procedures should be identified in the agreement with the placement provider (see 3.2 above). You should also have a mechanism in place to check and review these policies when setting up placement provision.

Necessary policy examples

Policies and procedures that are relevant to students' health, safety and risk include (but are not limited to):

- lone working
- personal safety
- mental health and stress
- sexual harassment
- home/office working (where applicable)

- future pandemic/national crisis contingency plans
- workplace health and safety
- workplace risk assessment
- liability insurance
- safeguarding policy
- equality, diversity and inclusion
- social media
- electronic devices/mobile phone use
- appropriate use of AI
- transport and travel policies for placement
- whistleblowing

Raising concerns

You should also ensure that students are supported to raise concerns about their health, wellbeing and risk while on placement. For example, you should make sure that students are aware of policies and procedures in relation to raising concerns, and that details of these policies and procedures are included in the placement agreement (see 3.2 above).

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

You should ensure that all students, regardless of their course route, have an appropriate induction which includes an introduction to all policies that are relevant to their placement and understand expectations as a student. This includes where students may have previously worked within a placement setting.

3.4: Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, practice educators, people with lived experience of social work, and students

You must ensure that you have mechanisms, policies and processes in place to monitor and evaluate all elements of the course. You should collect data and feedback from a range of sources and analyse and use this to inform changes and improvements you make to the course.

Course data and evaluation

You could collect data for evaluation by (doing any of the following):

- using the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarking statements
- using existing quality assurance bench-marking statements and monitoring tools
- analysing portfolios or logbooks used by students to record their learning whilst on the placement

- surveying practice educators and other staff involved in supporting and teaching students during the placement
- reviewing induction materials, policies and procedural documents provided to students during the placement

Placement data and evaluation

You should evaluate your placements and the effectiveness of your agreements with placement providers and practice educators. You should do this as part of your quality management processes. These processes should identify any weaknesses or concerns with individual placements, which should be discussed with the placement provider and steps taken to rectify the issues.

When reviewing placements, you could consider evaluating:

- the quality and quantity of teaching, supervision and feedback provided by practice educators and placement supervisors
- the availability of resources such as IT systems and research and reference material
- the personal support available to students while on the placement
- the development opportunities and training available to practice educators at the placement setting
- the ability of students with specific requirements, for example a disability, to access learning opportunities during the placement

Stakeholder involvement

Employers and practice educators

As a minimum, employers should be involved in:

- the allocation of practice education
- review of course content
- ongoing evaluation mechanisms of both the academic and practice elements of the course

You could do this by involving them in:

- stakeholder groups that monitor and review the course
- practice assessment panels
- annual or periodic course reviews
- placement provision discussions

People with lived experience

You must include people with lived experience of social work in your processes for the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the course.

As a minimum, people with lived experience should be involved in the review of both the academic and practice elements of the course.

You could do this by (doing any of the following):

- developing stakeholder groups that monitor and review the course
- including people with lived experience in practice assessment panels
- engaging people with lived experience networks in annual or periodic course reviews
- obtaining the views of people with lived experience of social work who have interacted with students in the practice setting
- involving people with lived experience in the review of placements, or the design of new placement models or opportunities

Students

You should ensure that student feedback is sought throughout the course.

You could do this through:

- staff student meetings
- student representatives
- module evaluations
- post-placement evaluations
- informal mechanisms (such as group discussion, individual feedback)
- formal feedback questionnaires

You should ensure that stakeholders are made aware of how their feedback has been actioned or fed into the development of the course.

3.5: Ensure that there is adequate placement capacity for the number of students admitted on to the course

It is important that students complete high-quality placements in appropriate settings, that allow them to undertake learning opportunities which will help them develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the professional standards by the time they complete their course.

When considering the number of students you admit, you should take account of placement capacity available to you. You should also ensure that each student will be able to undertake placements that meet the requirement of standards 2.1, 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3.

Your approach to identifying placements for your students should allow you to take steps to establish new placements if needed. For example, if you want to increase your intake of students or if you stop using particular placements and need to identify alternatives. You should carry out planning for placements for your students responsibly. You should consider how it could affect other social work courses in the same geographical area.

You may also wish to consider workforce planning information for your locality or region to help inform the numbers of students that you admit. For example, this could include information about the expected future recruitment and retention of social workers in your area, and/or the types of skills or roles that will be needed.

3.6: 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

The number of staff you need will depend on the cohort size of your course. You should be able to justify the number of staff you have in place. This should include consideration of:

- teaching
- supervision
- assessments
- level of responsibilities
- responsibilities to other courses within your institution

We do not set staff-to-student ratios. Instead, we consider the staffing within the overall context of the education you provide.

Your staff team should include enough registered and experienced social workers to ensure that students learn about professional practice from those who have direct experience of delivering social work services. You may wish to include visiting lecturers with specialist knowledge or associate roles in the delivery of the course. Evidencing this can be through staff CVs and identified roles within the team, for example module lead.

You should have arrangements in place to review the number of staff involved in the course and to manage situations such as staff absences. You should also have clear mechanisms in place to regularly review your overall staff capacity to consider:

- staff turnover
- changes in student numbers
- the addition of new courses to your subject

3.7: 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

Evaluation

You should be able to evidence how you evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes. You should do this by collecting and analysing data and using it to make changes or improvements where appropriate. This includes equality and diversity data in relation to learning outcomes.

Action

For example, you might make a change to your teaching or assessment if you identified, through your data analysis, that students with a particular protected characteristic tended to perform less well in that specific part of the course and it was related to the teaching or assessment approach.

Your data collection should incorporate verification systems to check the data is accurate and take appropriate data security and data protection measures.

3.8: Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice

It is important that you support educators to maintain the currency of their knowledge and understanding in professional practice.

We acknowledge that there may be people involved in the teaching, tutoring or assessment of students who are not members of the course team. For example, practitioners, sessional or visiting lecturers and people with lived experience. These people should be chosen based upon having the necessary relevant experience in accordance with their involvement in the course.

You could consider the following approaches to supporting educators:

- supporting academic staff to spend time back in practice
- staff development strategies
- training
- mentoring schemes
- professional development portfolios
- using workload models to build in time to undertake activities

Ensuring educators have a clear understanding of the appropriate use of artificial intelligence in social work education, including any relevant support or training.

Standard area 4 – Curriculum assessment

Standard: Courses must be designed to enable students to develop the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Courses must be designed so that students understand how and where these can be developed, how they will be assessed and how they will ultimately support students to meet the professional standards.

Outcome: Social work courses are shaped by the needs and insights of academia, employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work. This is to ensure a continually evolving curriculum which:

- is evidence-informed
- matches the contemporary demands of the whole sector
- is delivered by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals
- produces informed, capable, prepared and motivated graduates who deliver safe and effective services

Course providers will:

4.1: Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the professional standards

Course providers are expected to articulate how they are supporting students to meet the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements within the guidance on readiness for professional practice, as part of course design and delivery.

Content

Students should be able to demonstrate that they can meet the professional standards by the end of their course. Students also need to demonstrate a clear understanding of their obligations to meet the professional standards when they qualify and apply for registration, as well as throughout their future professional practice.

Throughout the course you should ensure that there are opportunities for discussion with students to ensure they know that 'social worker' is a protected title. They should also be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of professional regulation. They will understand how registration with Social Work England demonstrates their adherence to the professional standards and how this maintains public trust in the profession on the importance of regulation.

Students need to know (all of the following):

- that 'social worker' is a protected title
- what it means to be regulated
- the relationship between regulation and the professional standards

Further information can be found under standard 5.5.

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements provide further detail on what we expect to be included in social work courses so students can develop the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to be able to meet the professional standards. Students should be able to recognise the presence of the required knowledge, skills and behaviours within the curriculum. They should understand how and when their competency is assessed.

Our readiness for professional practice guidance outlines:

- the progressive thresholds for assessing the development of students' competency in each area
- examples of what development might look like in practice
- how education and training providers can support development
- assessment of how students are achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours

Therefore, it is essential that you refer to our readiness for professional practice guidance when designing your curriculum or reviewing the effectiveness of your programme.

Structure

In order to provide assurance that your curriculum design prepares students to meet the professional standards, you should have documentation that clearly shows how the content of your curriculum and the learning outcomes are mapped to the knowledge, skills and behaviours statements.

Every student who successfully completes the course should demonstrate competency across the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements regardless of any optional modules they have chosen.

It is important that your assessment approach and design ensures that students can meet the professional standards by the end of their course.

You should demonstrate how and when you assess the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements and the methods used.

Only students who demonstrate competency across all knowledge, skills and behaviours can achieve a qualification that gives them eligibility to apply for registration.

Students who cannot demonstrate competency across all of the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements may be eligible to receive a different award. This award would not enable them to be eligible to apply for registration.

Delivery

You should ensure that the delivery methods and teaching strategies chosen are appropriate to the subject matter. For example, where students are being supported to

develop specific skills, there should be the opportunity to practise these within an appropriate environment. Curriculum delivery should also consider the different learning styles of students and acknowledge that they learn and develop at different rates.

Preparing students for future practice

You should ensure that course content and delivery continue to reflect the challenges and opportunities that the social work profession experiences in daily practice. This includes considering changes to the profession such as:

- hybrid working
- inclusive practices
- preparing students for the potential implications, ethical considerations and appropriate use of advances in technology

For more detail about expectations in relation to ongoing development and review of the curriculum, please see standard 4.2.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social work practice

It is important that students are prepared for using AI in their future work. The course should cover how artificial intelligence might be used in social work practice and how to use it responsibly. This could include (any of the following):

- risks of use, such as bias and discrimination
- limitations of use and misrepresentation
- ethical use of AI and implications of use
- transparency and consent
- data protection and confidentiality

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

We recognise that there are different routes into social work which adopt a variety of models, lengths and structures. Therefore, the readiness for professional practice guidance is not prescriptive about how and when students should achieve competency. Instead, you should consider how you ensure ample opportunities are provided to support development throughout the student journey.

4.2: Ensure that the views of employers, practice educators and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum

Stakeholder groups outlined within the standard, should be involved at different points in the curriculum lifecycle. Stakeholders should be involved in aspects of design, development and delivery of the curriculum in the following ways:

- developing teaching approaches and materials

- planning and developing the course, for example by giving their perspective and feedback on the content of curricula and the methods of teaching, which could include formal membership of curriculum development and governance groups
- teaching and learning activities, for example by giving presentations, facilitating seminars, contributing to small group work with students and mentoring students
- the design and types of assessments used on the course

Stakeholder involvement

To effectively involve employers, practice educators and people with lived experience, you should go beyond just seeking their feedback. Think about how you can work collaboratively with different stakeholder groups to ensure that the course is shaped by their views, needs, evidence, and insights. This could involve working collaboratively with partner organisations, individuals, or with groups such as advocacy or support groups.

You should:

- ensure that relevant stakeholders understand the content of the curriculum (for example, practice educators should know what is being taught to students to enable them to make links with practice)
- demonstrate how different stakeholder views have helped to shape the curriculum
- consider holding regular meetings with these groups (to gather their feedback on the curriculum)
- use views to inform curriculum review and continuous improvement
- provide feedback to stakeholders on how their views have influenced curriculum design and delivery

Using the principles of co-production

Co-production can be defined as working together with people as equal partners in the design, delivery and review of social work education. The Social Care Institute for Excellence suggests that co-production needs to be based on these key principles (all of the following):

- **Equality:** No one group or person is more important than another, and everyone has skills, knowledge, abilities and other assets to bring to the process.
- **Diversity:** Co-production should be inclusive for all communities and groups.
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring that everyone has the same opportunity to take part in an activity fully, in the way that suits them best.
- **Reciprocity:** Ensuring that people receive something back for putting something in. This may also include ensuring that you have appropriate policies and systems in place to pay people with lived experience for their time.

4.3: Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks

You should consider equality, diversity and inclusion principles when designing your course and supporting systems and processes. Areas you may wish to consider include:

- ensuring that you design and deliver your course in accordance with your organisation's equality and diversity policies. All students are treated fairly, including while on placement, regardless of:
    - age
    - disability
    - gender reassignment
    - race
    - religion or belief
    - sex
    - sexual orientation
    - marriage and civil partnership
    - pregnancy and maternity
- publishing processes and policies for supporting students with physical and mental health conditions and promoting these among staff and students
- promoting health and wellbeing for your students through activities and student services, and by empowering students to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
- supporting and encouraging students to declare physical and mental health conditions if they need to
- making the physical environment of your course accessible for disabled students, for example by having ramps, automatic doors and lifts
- having equipment and materials to help students with health conditions or impairments learn, such as hearing loops in lecture theatres or printing documents on coloured paper
- considering the physical environment at placement locations, assessing if there are placement locations that are suitable for disabled students and prioritising these for disabled students if necessary
- ensuring that assessments are constructed and scheduled in a way that allows reasonable adjustments to be made for students, for example more time for a student to complete an assessment or opportunities for additional breaks

4.4: Ensure that the course is updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice

It is important to ensure that your curriculum stays relevant. You should update it regularly in line with research and developments or changes in legislation, government policy and current best practice. For example, you may consider being able to show how the design of the curriculum predicts or reflects changes such as:

- changes in practice or services
- developments in the profession's research and evidence base
- advances in technology
- changes in the law
- changes in people with lived experience of social work's needs and expectations

Also, you may want to consider how to reflect feedback on employability (from students and employers), changes in workforce development and lifelong learning, and developments in professional and regulatory practice, including research and guidance.

4.5: Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course

The knowledge, skills and behaviours statements and the readiness for professional practice guidance provide further detail on what we expect to be included in social work courses.

Social workers are frequently required to make decisions which may be based upon brief interactions with people or following an in-depth assessment of need and risk. To make decisions that are fair, proportionate and ethical, social workers must adopt an evidence informed approach. This includes using evidence from:

- research
- academic literature and theory
- other multi-agency teams
- local guidance
- the views and wishes of people they work with

We expect theory and practice to be combined within both the taught and practical parts of the course. By 'practical parts of the course' we mean practice-based learning as well as practical skills development in an academic setting. Theory and practice must be linked and must inform each other.

You should ensure that you enable students to identify and articulate the importance of theory and how it informs their existing and future social work practice. For example, students must have the opportunity to learn theory. They must understand why it is

important, but also to reflect on and learn how to apply theoretical frameworks in practice.

4.6: Ensure that students work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working including in integrated settings

Academic learning

There are an increasing number of social workers who work within multidisciplinary teams. Students should have an understanding of the different professionals they are likely to encounter in social work practice and the roles they play.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours statements and the readiness for professional practice guidance provide further detail on what we expect to be included in social work courses.

By 'other professions' we mean other health and social care professions and professions outside of health and social care. For example, the legal profession or psychology. You should consider how teaching with other professions could be integrated into courses, such as the use of simulated learning environments. Placements should not be relied upon as the main mechanism to ensure that students are able to work with and learn from other professions.

Improving the quality of care for people with lived experience of social work should be the key factor in deciding which other professions or occupational groups are relevant to students on a course. You may wish to consider employing teaching staff from other professions to help deliver your course. For example, by giving lectures, leading seminars or group work, or acting as academic tutors for students.

Placements

Placements are a key opportunity for students to work with and learn from other professions, including in integrated settings. But they should not be the only mechanism by which students learn and work with other professions.

You should consider how your documentation sets out when and how students will undertake learning opportunities during placements. These learning opportunities should allow them to work with other professions.

4.7 Ensure that you design assessments that are robust, reliable and valid, and allow those who successfully complete the course to have developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to meet the professional standards. You should include regular monitoring and evaluation of assessments to ensure that they remain robust and reliable

The knowledge, skills and behaviours that this standard relates to are set out in our readiness for professional practice guidance.

You should design your assessments to ensure that students are prepared to meet the professional standards so they can apply to register with us.

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements set out our expectations of what a social worker should be able to demonstrate upon completing their initial education and training. The values, ethics and professional expectations of social work outlined in the professional standards are embedded across the knowledge, skills and behaviours statements. Therefore, we expect that the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements will underpin and inform the design of assessments on the course.

Approach to assessments

You should make use of formative assessments to provide ongoing feedback and support for students and to foster development in preparation for summative assessment. It is best practice for students to have experienced all your assessments in a formative context before they are required to undertake them in a summative context. This will ensure they know what to expect from their summative assessments and can prepare appropriately.

You should consider how individual assessments and examinations contribute to overall judgements about students' performance and progression. When producing and developing your assessments, you should consider including the following information, ensuring that you are adhering to your organisations policies and procedures in relation to pass marks, resits (and so on):

- the rationale for your approach to assessments, ideally referencing academic literature and best practice in assessment
- when and in what format assessments take place during the course
- how assessments can be co-produced with people with lived experience, employers and practice educators
- pass marks required for individual modules and assessments
- the assessment requirements for progression in the course, for example which assessments a student must pass before they can progress

- compensation regulations
- the resit policy, which should include the number of resits students are allowed for modules and placements (and within what period)
- the maximum time a student can take to complete the course
- information about options available for students who are at risk of not progressing or not completing the course, including alternative qualification options
- academic appeals
- mitigating circumstances, reasonable adjustments, academic appeals and complaints policies
- who is responsible for managing and delivering assessments

Different assessment methods will be appropriate to assess different learning outcomes. You should specify which method (or methods) you use to assess students against each learning outcome. Assessment methods could include:

- presentations (including vivas)
- essays
- coursework
- case study analysis
- examinations
- practice portfolios

Quality of assessments

Your documentation needs to show that your assessments are reliable. They should be consistent and thorough enough to produce replicable results across a cohort of students regardless of when the assessment takes place or who marks it. You should design your assessments to ensure students can demonstrate how they have met one or more of the knowledge, skills or behaviours statements or, learning outcomes.

However, it is important to balance the reliability of the assessment method with its validity. For example, a multiple-choice answer examination may be a reliable way of testing theoretical knowledge. But it would not be a reliable way of assessing a student's ability to reflect on their experiences or demonstrating behaviours needed for professional practice.

When designing assessments, you should consider methods that draw on contexts and scenarios that are relevant to the practice of social work. An example would be an observed practical assessment of a student interacting with a person with lived experience of social work. This could be done through role play.

You need to show that your assessments are fair and provide all students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their progression and achievement. Your assessments need to also take into consideration a specific student's needs, for example the needs of disabled students or those with extenuating circumstances.

Management and review of assessments

You may wish to consider including the following in the governance and management framework for your assessments:

- external examiner(s) (see 4.10 below for further information)
- a senior member of staff with overall responsibility for assessment
- the ways in which you monitor, review and evaluate assessments
- working in collaboration with stakeholders to incorporate feedback
- a policy or process which covers clear expectations and rules around the use by a student of AI tools or other types of technological assistance

Your assessment approach and associated policies should be shared with students and educators. They should be readily available, on internal websites or as part of student and educator handbooks or briefing materials.

4.8: Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course

You should carry out assessments at appropriate stages during the course to match students' expected progression. For example, you should schedule end of module and end of year assessments close to the end of that phase of learning, with appropriate time allowed for revision.

You should consider the assessment burden on students when scheduling your assessments. For example, scheduling several assessments in a short period of time may cause undue stress for students. Scheduling assessments so there are reasonable gaps between them could reduce pressure on students.

You should also ensure that the knowledge, skills and behaviours that students must demonstrate competently are considered. The knowledge, skills and behaviours are set out in the guidance on readiness for professional practice. Students must meet all the knowledge, skills and behaviours immediately prior to progressing through the course provider's award board and at key progressive thresholds as outlined in readiness for professional practice guidance. They must be met prior to applying to register with Social Work England.

4.9: Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students throughout the course to support their ongoing development, progression and performance in assessments

You should provide feedback to students throughout their course in relation to areas including:

- formative (informal) assessments
- summative (formal) assessments
- placement activities

It is vital that students understand that the knowledge, skills and behaviours statements, which are set out within the readiness for professional practice guidance, are a core part of their initial education and training. All assessments should include how students are achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours, as set out in standards 4.1 and 4.7. Students should also be clear about how and when the different aspects of the statements are assessed and the methods used to do so.

When you provide feedback to students, you should consider (all of the following):

- the policy and process for providing feedback to students and how this is made available
- the form of feedback you give should align with the purpose of the assessment
- that sometimes it may be appropriate to provide no feedback other than the test result. You should state the reasons for this in the policy document

You should support students so they can use this feedback to help inform their current and ongoing development. For example, you may wish to encourage students to keep a reflective journal which they can take forward with them and build on during (either of the following):

- their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)
- the early career development programme (ECDP)

It could also support ongoing continuing professional development (CPD).

It is important that students receive useful feedback as soon as is practical after their assessment about their progression and how they have performed.

4.10: Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiners for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the Social Work England register

You should ensure that staff who carry out assessments for your course are (both of the following):

- suitably experienced and skilled
- appropriately trained and supported

Your assessors should have relevant qualifications and experience. You should have confidence in their ability to apply the course's assessment methods and marking schemes fairly and consistently.

Training for assessors could include providing:

- information about course assessments
- information about how and when the course's learning outcomes are assessed
- information about how assessments contribute to deciding whether a student is able to meet the professional standards
- equality, diversity and inclusion training

External examiners

It is important that there is appropriate professional input in the external review of your assessment process. You should recruit external examiners through a transparent process using role specifications that include requirements in relation to expertise and experience in the design and delivery of assessments.

You should have processes for briefing external examiners and providing training for their role as appropriate. You should ensure that your external examiners have professional experience relevant to the course and are registered social workers.

Your external examiners should contribute to the review and development of assessment strategies, providing advice from an overarching perspective. Their role should be strategic and at the level of reviewing processes and systems, rather than the examination of individual students.

You should use published guidance on external examiners to inform your processes. For example, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for external examining. You should be able to show that you review comments from external examiners. You should give due consideration to any recommendations they make to improve your assessments and be able to justify why you have not acted on any recommendations, if this is the case.

4.11: Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression, including learning in practice settings

It is expected as students' progress through a pre-registration course that their competency will develop. This can be through academic learning, placement and work-based learning opportunities and reflective practice. The progressive thresholds in our readiness for professional practice guidance sets out our expectations.

You should have clear governance mechanisms to oversee progression and make decisions about the assessment and graduation of individual students.

Your processes should support (all of the following):

- reaching consistent, evidence-based and defensible decisions about individual students, using expert judgement in an accountable and consistent manner, when necessary

- identifying borderline candidates, for example by using standard error of measurement (SEM) criteria and applying this to candidates on both sides of the pass mark
- exercising discretion in a fair and consistent manner that would withstand challenge on the grounds of due process
- defining any use of compensation, consistent with ensuring that all students that graduate can meet the professional standards
- taking appropriate consideration of extenuating circumstances without compromising the need for graduates to meet the learning outcomes and the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements. You should not award additional marks in these circumstances or change pass/fail decisions
- you may consider whether the student should be given a further chance to take the assessment in addition to your usual retake rules, or whether a previous attempt is to be discarded and the next attempt counted as the first attempt
- you may think it appropriate to require students to submit extenuating circumstances before assessments rather than when they find they have failed. External examiners should be able to review these decisions
- decisions about student remediation

The relationship between your assessment processes and policies and those of your parent higher education institution (HEI) should be clear and explicit. You should work with your HEI with the aim of ensuring that decisions relating to professional competence of students and how this affects their progression do not conflict with the regulations of your HEI.

Your rules on how many times a student can retake an assessment should strike a suitable balance between the need to (both of the following):

- support students
- make sure that students can meet the professional standards

It is important that retake assessments are held to the same standard as the initial assessment.

Your assessment regulations should also include how many times a student can attempt each scheduled placement within the course. Our expectation is that students should not be allowed more than 2 valid attempts at each scheduled placement unless extenuating circumstances are agreed to allow a further 'first' attempt. The regulations should consider any circumstances where a placement attempt may not be considered valid. If your organisations regulations allow more than 2 valid placement attempts, you should consider what exemptions can be applied.

4.12: Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by knowledge, skills, behaviours and understanding in relation to research and evaluation

Students should learn how to use evidence from research and other sources to inform and systematically evaluate their practice. By 'evidence informed practice' we mean the ability to gather, use, analyse and evaluate evidence to inform decision making and enable effective practice. Evidence may come from research, audit and evaluation or feedback from people with lived experience of social work (for example).

You can achieve development of evidence informed practice through (any of the following):

- student centred and independent learning
- teaching and assessment strategies
- student led research

You should make sure that the course encourages students to develop analytical skills and research appreciation that is relevant to the profession.

Standard area 5 – Student support

Standard: Students must receive appropriate educational and pastoral support within both the educational and practice settings.

Outcome: Social work students have effective educational and pastoral support to progress through their course and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to meet the professional standards when they qualify.

Course providers will:

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

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements in the readiness for professional practice guidance outline how social workers should be able to recognise and communicate how health and wellbeing might impact on practice and take steps to seek support. Therefore, we expect course providers to articulate what support is available to students and how it is promoted throughout the course.

Regardless of the route the student is on, they should be able to access resources to support them to manage their health and emotional wellbeing. This includes while they are on placement.

As highlighted in standard 1.4, students should not be required to disclose any short-term or long-term physical or mental health conditions. However, if a student does not declare a health condition, then they may not receive the reasonable adjustments necessary to support them to meet academic or placement requirements.

Students who declare that they have lived experience of social work may need special arrangements to be made for their course, or they could be entitled to additional support. For example, if they are a care leaver they could be entitled to financial support during their course. It may be appropriate to source alternative placements to avoid a student completing a placement in a setting where they have received or currently receive services.

You should regularly review your counselling, careers advice, and occupational health services to ensure they are providing appropriate support for social work students. Other types of support you could consider include:

- support for students with caring responsibilities
- support for students with financial difficulties
- support with remote access for distance learners
- support for international students

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

You should ensure that courses which require students to spend most of their time in practice-based settings are able to access support. This may include specific protected time and remote or out of hours access to resources.

5.2: Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development

It is important that students can access resources to support their academic development, such as personal or academic tutors or mentors, library services or dedicated software. You should have processes in place to ensure that students have access to regular feedback on their academic progress.

These processes should also support students who need (or want) additional help with aspects of their course. These processes should be in place for all students, but you may want to consider specific support for:

- students with identified learning needs
- mature students
- disabled students
- students who must take periods of planned or unplanned leave from the course
- students with caring responsibilities
- students with financial difficulties
- international students

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

You should ensure that courses which require students to spend most of their time in practice-based settings offer the same level of support as traditional routes. This may include specific protected time and remote or out of hours access to resources.

5.3: Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements outline how social workers should be able to recognise when and how health and wellbeing might impact on their ability to practice safely. Course providers must ensure that there is a clear process for ensuring ongoing suitability, alongside procedures for responding to concerns.

Ongoing suitability

As students' progress through their course, it is important to check that their conduct, health and character remains suitable for the practice of social work. You must have processes in place to regularly reassess students' suitability and deal with any concerns about students.

The processes you have in place should be fair and supportive, and focused on addressing concerns raised about students' conduct, health or character. They should also be effective and allow for a range of outcomes. For example, concerns about a student's conduct may show that they need extra support or, in serious cases, that they are not suitable to continue the course.

You should also seek independent medical advice about the student's condition and make reasonable adjustments for the student if this is possible and could help. If these steps do not resolve the concern, you should consider using fitness to practise or suitability to study processes to decide about the student's suitability to remain on the course.

Student fitness to practise

Each course provider will have its own fitness to practise procedure. These should take into consideration the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) 'good practice framework – fitness to practise procedures' and Social Work England's fitness to practise process.

As we do not currently regulate students, we do not need to be informed if a fitness to practise concern relates to a student. The course provider must have considered all fitness to practise concerns and reached a determination on them before the social work student can be permitted to graduate. Your fitness to practise process should address concerns in a way that protects the public and provides support to any student going through the process.

Student placements

The OIA fitness to practise framework says that course providers should distinguish between a student's failure to achieve the standard necessary and a student's fitness to practise. A student who fails to achieve the necessary standards might be given the opportunity to improve their practice through extending or repeating the placement. A student who is found to be unfit to practise will not be able to continue unless the provider agrees to give the student the opportunity to remedy the issues through supportive improvement measures.

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

For students who are employed during their study, you should have agreements in place to ensure that any concerns relating to suitability are managed by the appropriate organisation.

You should also ensure that there are processes in place to ensure that all organisations remain informed of the progress and outcomes of any processes or investigations. For example, where an employer is leading a disciplinary process or investigation, you may agree that a representative from the course provider is invited to sit on a panel discussion.

5.4: Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course

We expect you to make supportive arrangements for students who have declared any additional needs, while also abiding by the Equality Act 2010. This includes those who have long term health conditions and impairments.

You should be able to demonstrate that you have processes in place to help identify where these arrangements are necessary in relation to the academic elements of the course.

You should ensure timely communication to partner organisations to promote consistency of support for students. This is where there is likely to be an impact on the student's practice or placement arrangements. Where information is shared between agencies, you should ensure that the appropriate consents are in place.

Examples of reasonable adjustments that could be made include:

- additional time for an assessment or specific components of an assessment
- allowing a student to take the assessment in a quiet environment
- allowing a student to take breaks during the assessment period
- providing assessment materials printed on coloured paper
- providing specific resources to support students with identified or physical learning needs

- offering support for students who require a period of planned or unplanned leave from the course
- agreeing extensions to assignment deadlines, where appropriate

Fast track and apprenticeships routes

For students on fast track and apprenticeship routes, there should be clear arrangements in place to ensure that reasonable adjustments are available in all settings. This should be supported by clear agreements which outline where responsibilities lie between the course provider and employer/placement agency with a regular review process.

5.5: Provide information to students about their transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development (CPD)

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements in the readiness for professional practice guidance outline what students should know and be able to do to ensure safe and professional practice when applying to join the register. This includes understanding:

- the role of Social Work England as the regulator for social workers
- the status of 'social worker' as a protected title
- their responsibility to meet the professional standards
- their responsibility to engage with CPD requirements as set out in the professional standards

You should provide information to students about the above, including details of the consequences of failing to adhere to requirements (for example, through misuse of title prior to registration).

You should also provide information on the multiple career pathways available in social work and what to expect when taking up a role as a registered social worker, including information about the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) and the early career development programme (ECDP).

Standard area 6 – Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register

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

Outcome: Social work students who successfully complete approved courses are eligible to apply to join the social work register.

Course providers will:

6.1: The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work

The threshold entry route for new entrants to our register is normally a bachelor's degree with honours in social work.

This standard contains the word 'normally'. This is to show that you may be able to design a course which leads to a different qualification, but which meets these standards and the professional standards, and so can still be approved by us. For people who qualified through different routes in the past, other qualifications may be accepted for entry onto our register.